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AGRI-NEWS

January 8, 1996

CANADIANA

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FBMI alumni bursary program offers rebates

Alumni of the Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) program can receive rebates of up to $500 when they register for farm business management training.

"The farm business management bursary is available to FBMI alumni who have taken over 80 hours of training within the last three years," explains Delin Sheehan-Millang, central region FBMI representative. Bursaries are one element of an FBMI alumni benefit program.

Eligible training areas include ownership and estate planning, and general management topics such as strategic planning, business planning and goal setting. Production, financial, marketing and human resource management courses also qualify. These training courses are offered by agriculture colleges, community colleges, universities and private sector firms.

"The Westlock Grain Marketing Club has more than a dozen of its members taking advantage of the bursary program. As a group they're attending the *MAP'96* conference in Red Deer by using their FBMI bursary benefits," says Sheehan-Millang. [See separate story this issue about *Managing Agriculture for Profit Conference (MAP'96)*.]

FBMI has helped over 9,000 farm managers improve their farming operations. "The alumni program offers those farm managers excellent savings on many farm management tools and education opportunities," she notes.

Friends of the FBMI alumni program include London Drugs, DTN, The Legacy Group, GLOBALINK and KenAgra Management Services.

For more information about the alumni benefits programs or FBMI courses, contact the FBMI representative in your area.

The southern representative is Craig Smith in Glenwood, at (403) 626-3448 or fax (403) 626-3461. Sheehan-Millang is in Stettler at (403) 742-5474 or fax (403) 742-7527.

The northwest rep is Arla Trueblood in Dapp at (403) 945-3745 (phone and fax). The northeast rep is Elma Herde in Ardmore at (403) 826-1956 (phone and fax). Nan Bartlett is the Peace rep in Fairview at (403) 835-4288 or fax (403) 835-2899.

Contact: *Delin Sheehan-Millang*
(403) 742-5474

This Week

FBMI alumni bursary program offers rebates 1

Horse industry will converge on Red Deer 2

MAP to making the most of what you've got 2

Beyond your front step — a home based business conference 3

Neighbors caring about neighbors RCW workshop theme 3

Learn about commercial berry production at two-day school 4

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch
(formerly Print Media)

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

SHOUT
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IT

Horse industry will converge on Red Deer

The business of horses will be in the spotlight this weekend, Jan. 12 through 14, at the annual *Horse Breeders and Owners Conference* at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

"This is Canada's premiere conference for horse enthusiasts and the horse business, and we expect registration to reach 500 again this year," says Les Burwash manager of Alberta Agriculture's equine programs and one of the conference organizers.

The conference features a line-up of international speakers discussing topics related to production, business and performance. The program has four streams — Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants aren't limited to any one stream, and can attend any session. They also receive the printed materials from all the sessions.

The opening plenary presentation features a discussion of balancing relationships with husbands, wives and horses. Another plenary speaker, Bernard Rollin, will discuss the new ethic for animals and the equine industry. His presentation is part of the Fred Pearce Memorial Speaker Series and is sponsored by the Alberta SPCA. How horses see is the subject of the conference ending plenary session.

Production related topics include how horses use forages, feed additives in horse rations, prevention and control of strangles, embryonic development in relationship to pregnancy success or failure and conformation as a world of optimums.

Business topics include using the computer on today's and the future's horse farm, developing local support for racing as a sport, industry trends and farm management to survive in a changing industry.

Performance related conference topics include goal setting for fearless riding, what a judge looks for, the last 45 days before a major competition, know how a saddle fits your horse, and water and electrolyte balance in the performance horse.

Conference registration is $75 per person with every additional person from the same farm at $50.

For more information about the 1996 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403) 948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403) 948-8532

MAP to making the most of what you've got

A cattleman and greenhouse grower will tell *1996 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP'96) Conference* delegates how to make the most of the resources they have.

"Bryan Nelson of Ever-Green Greenhouses of Red Deer and Frank Jenkins of the Lazy U Ranch of Pincher Creek will share their stories about how they took what they had and built successful businesses," says Doug Barlund, 1996 MAP conference chair. MAP'96 runs Jan. 30 through Feb. 1 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

"Some people start with advantages and resources, and others have to seek things such as land and capital to get started. This session is designed to get producers thinking about how to make the best use of their resources and make their operations more efficient," adds Barlund.

Nelson has been in the greenhouse business since 1968 and started his own business in 1979. In the late 1980s he added a partner to the business who specializes in growing and shipping, while Nelson handles sales, finances and bookkeeping.

Jenkins, a fourth generation rancher, was named the Alberta Commercial Cattleman of 1993 by the Alberta Salers' Association. The 6,700 acre ranch includes a purebred herd, feeder cattle operation and a booming replacement heifer business.

The Jenkins-Nelson session is one of more than 20 concurrent sessions offered at MAP'96. Topics range through a variety of farm business management subjects including a major focus on marketing, as the conference theme is *mastering your markets*. MAP is Western Canada's premiere conference on leading-edge farm management issues and is dedicated to *smart farming*.

Daily and conference registration packages are available for individuals or for couples. There's also a special promotion for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) beginning farmer incentive clients.

Conference information is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices and AFSC offices across the province. Registration and conference details are also available through the MAP hotline by calling 1-800-387-6030 or on the Internet at poole@agric.gov.ab.ca.

Contact: Doug Barlund
(403) 556-4245

Beyond your front step — a home-based business conference

Getting your home-based business out your door and beyond your front step is the subject of a one-day workshop in Barrhead Feb. 1.

"The conference offers sessions for people involved in new or existing home-based businesses, as well as for specific types of businesses," says Kerry Engel, Alberta Agriculture rural development specialist.

"There's an opportunity to learn how to increase your profitability if you're already in business, or how to turn your ideas into a business if you're just starting out," she adds.

Opening the conference is a discussion of industry trends and generating ideas. Later in the morning, participants can choose between breakout sessions on either starting a home-based business or expanding their home based business.

Keynote and luncheon speaker is Nadja Piatka, president of 3 Blondes & A Brownie, a health service industry consultant and author. "She works from her home-based office," notes Engel.

In the afternoon, conference participants have the choice of sessions devoted to specific sectors. The options are crafters, service providers, small-scale manufacturing, tourism and value-added food processing. These concurrent sessions feature experienced home-based business people as well as business consultants.

For example, Piatka is one of the three panelists in the value-added food processing session. She's joined by Karen Goad, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development agri-food development consultant, and Evelyn Dickout, owner of HANDEE MEADOWS/Gramma Bears Bakery. Dickout markets pheasants and pheasant soup, and produces baked food from a licensed kitchen she built in her yard.

"These sector sessions will give participants the opportunity to learn how to work within regulations and guidelines, access and network with valuable resources and resource people, localize global trends and even avoid mistakes that others made," says Engel.

Registration is $59 per person. Cheques can be made payable to Barrhead & District Economic Development Board and mailed to 5014-50 Avenue, Box 4521, Barrhead, AB, T7N 1A4. For more information, call (403) 674-2338 or fax (403) 674-5648.

The conference is a co-operative project of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Economic Development and Tourism, the Barrhead & District Chamber of Commerce, the Barrhead & District Economic Development Board, Tawatinaw Community Future Development Corp and the Yellowhead East Business Development Corp.

For more information, contact Engel in Westlock at (403) 349-4465.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(403) 349-4465

Neighbors caring about neighbors RCW workshop theme

Neighbors caring about neighbors is the theme of the 1996 *Rural Crime Watch Provincial Workshop* Feb. 2 and 3 in Calgary.

"It's also the basic philosophy of the Rural Crime Watch program," says Cliff Munroe of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"The annual workshop features a variety of subjects to help crime watch members carry out their mandate," he adds.

Farm security, the new federal gun legislation, the Young Offenders Act, safety for seniors and livestock investigations are among the workshop sessions.

The RCMP drug section will present a session on home operations and how Rural Crime Watch members can help the RCMP detect hydroponic marijuana operations. Also examined will be how to detect substance abuse in teens.

Rural Crime Watch members can also help out fish and wildlife officers. "This workshop also has a session scheduled on fish and wildlife special investigations and how crime watch members can help fish and wildlife officers through a better understanding on their jobs," notes Munroe.

The provincial association meeting will take place on Feb. 3 after the workshop sessions conclude.

Hosts of the 1996 provincial workshop are the Cochrane, Turner Valley and Okotoks Rural Crime Watch associations.

For more information, contact Bill Bateman in Cochrane at (403) 932-5428, Lynn Roberts in Stony Plain at (403) 470-0627 or Munroe in Edmonton at (403) 427-4241.

Contact: *Cliff Munroe*
(403) 427-4241

Learn about commercial berry production at two-day school

New and experienced commercial berry producers can go to school Feb. 7 and 8 in Edmonton.

The 10th annual *Commercial Berry Production School* will be held in Edmonton. Current production and marketing information about growing raspberries, strawberries and saskatoons is featured.

"The school starts out with a look at the industry in general, then gets specific on particular types of berry production," says Lloyd Hausher, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development fruit crop specialist.

The first morning looks at business topics such as equipment and dealing with customers. Raspberries are in the spotlight in the afternoon. Day two is devoted to strawberries and saskatoons.

"Grower presentations are featured in each of these sessions," notes Hausher. "They'll share their experiences, what works and what doesn't."

Sessions will also include discussions of berry varieties, pests and pest control, irrigation, fertility, crop management and other production topics.

A variety of registration options are available. "Daily registration and whole school, pre and at the door registration rates are available. Plus, Alberta Market Garden Association members get a price break," he adds.

One-day pre-registration is $30 for members and $40 for non-members, and complete school registration is $55 for members and $75 for non-members.

At the door, one-day registration is $35 for members and $45 for non-members.

Two-day registration is $65 per person for members and $85 for non-members. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m. at the Regency Hotel (7230 Argyll Road) in Edmonton.

For more information about the school, registration or berry production, contact Hausher in Brooks at (403) 362-3391. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Lloyd Hausher*
(403) 362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Building on Opportunities farm family business conferences

A series of one day farm family business conferences will take place across the northwest region later this month. *Building on Opportunities* is built around the theme that tomorrow's farmers must be ready not only to take opportunities, but also to create them. Each of the three conferences will help participants shape their future, evaluate opportunities, create an image and communicate for success. The first is at Josephburg Community Hall on January 23, the second at Stony Plain Motor Inn on January 24 and the third on January 25 at Westlock Memorial Hall. Featured speakers are Doug Livingstone, former Alberta Pool president, crop specialist David Samm, purebred cattle breeder and exporter Bob Prestage and adult educator Fern Richardson. The registration deadline is Jan. 19 and registration is $22 per person. For more information, contact the Morinville, Stony Plain or Westlock Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices.

Egg producer meetings coming

Three regional information meetings for egg producers will take place in Edmonton, Airdrie and Lethbridge later this month. Members of the Alberta Egg Producers Board will be on hand to update producers on current industry issues. The meetings are at the J.G. O'Donoghue Building in Edmonton on Jan. 23, at the Alberta Agriculture Centre in Airdrie on Jan. 31 and the Agriculture Centre in Lethbridge on Feb. 1. The board's annual meeting is March 5 in Red Deer. For more information, contact the egg board office in Calgary at (403) 250-1191.

Alberta seed growers meet Jan. 30-Feb.1

The Alberta branch of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association will hold its 67th annual meeting Jan. 30 through Feb. 1 in Edmonton. An afternoon workshop on new varieties will precede the annual meeting. For more information, contact Bill Witbeck in Lacombe at (403) 782-4641.

Effective forage and livestock management conference in North Battleford

A two-day conference in North Battleford will examine effective forage and livestock management. The conference runs Jan. 30 and 31 at the Western Development Museum. The program includes 21 presentations in four broad topic areas — grazing management, land use, livestock management and pasture improvement. Registration is $60 per person by Jan. 16 and $75 per person after that date. This fee includes two lunches, a banquet, refreshment breaks and proceedings. For more information, contact Brendan Kowlenko in Unity at (306) 228-6402 or Karen Bundus in Regina at (306) 757-9499.

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AGRI-NEWS

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4-H Hall of Fame now boasts 45 members

The Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame has added two new members to its roster bringing the inductee total to 45.

Terry Crisp of Monitor and Bill McGrath of Vermilion were officially inducted at ceremonies during the 54th annual Alberta 4-H Leaders Conference on Jan. 13. The conference was in Edmonton Jan. 12 through 14.

Crisp's 4-H involvement began in 1954 with the Consort 4-H Calf Club. During his six years as a member, he served in most executive roles and was club efficiency winner.

He returned to 4-H as a leader in 1965 and continued the role as the Consort 4-H Beef Club leader for 26 years. He also served on district council between 1965 and 1992, worked with the regional council for 10 years and the provincial council between 1986 and 1993. Crisp and his wife Dianne were inducted to a regional 4-H wall of distinction in Stettler in 1993.

"His nominators described Terry as a 4-H volunteer who has gone beyond the normal volunteer description," notes Ted Youck, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's home economics and 4-H branch.

"They also noted his leadership particularly through his great passion for 4-H public speaking, his encouragement of regional 4-H judging clinics and his knowledge of the beef industry and ability to share it with 4-H members," he adds.

McGrath is the second inductee from Vermilion in as many years. His involvement with 4-H began in the mid-1970s when his children joined the local Preston 4-H Beef Club. He became an assistant leader in 1977, then club leader in 1980. As leader, he encouraged members to become more involved with the entire 4-H program and its range of activities beyond club projects. Since 1988, he has continued to be an assistant leader.

Involved in district, regional and provincial councils, he has served as president at both regional and provincial levels. Since 1991, he's been a member of the Alberta 4-H Foundation.

"Bill has contributed to the 4-H movement in many ways. He's supported public speaking, the provincial heifer show, a number of exchanges, the scholarship program and leader development," says Youck.

The Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame is located on the second floor of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's headquarters, the J.G. O'Donoghue Building at 7000-113 Street in Edmonton.

Contact: Kathy Hougham *Penny Wilkes*
(403)422-4444 *(403)422-4444*

This Week

4-H Hall of Fame now boasts 45 members 1
Bans and new restrictions on Furadan use 2
A cold end to 1995 2
1995 challenged Alberta farmers 3
ARTI accelerates into '96 3
Conservation and technology combined in AgriFuture Expo 4
Northwest food processors challenged by Taste of Success 5
MAP to agricultural policy discussions 5
Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Bans and new restrictions on Furadan use

A five-year review of carbofuran has resulted in cancelled and changed registration for different forms of the insecticide.

"For Alberta farmers, it means a common grasshopper control product will no longer be available," says Mike Dolinski, a pest management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency announced the registration changes just before Christmas. The ruling covers the liquid and three granular forms of carbofuran, more commonly known by the trade name Furadan. Some restrictions are immediate and others will take effect Dec. 31, 1997. They follow a five-year special review initiated because of environmental concerns, particularly related to birds. One of the species expected to benefit from the ruling is the prairie burrowing owl, an endangered species.

"Most significant for Alberta farmers is de-registration of the spray formulation, Furadan 480. It will no longer be available to control grasshoppers in cereals, pastures, headlands and road sides," says Dolinski.

Nor can the spray be used to control weevils or grasshoppers in alfalfa. However, some limited registration approval was given for the pesticide to control flea beetles in canola and mustard, sunflower beetles in sunflowers, a number of corn pests and foliar insects on potatoes and green peppers.

Two granular types, Furadan 10G and CR-10, also will no longer be available. Both were seen as a risk to wildlife, in particular birds. The other granular formation, Furadan 5G was given conditional registration.

"It will only be available to control flea beetles in canola and mustard. As well, significant labelling changes were required detailing the type of application equipment that can be used," notes Dolinski. "The agency also requires two years further study of wildlife risk from this form of Furadan."

Farmers who have Furadan on hand can continue to use it until the end 1997 notes Dolinski. "Any product labelled for grasshopper control, for example, can be used through to December 31, 1997."

Furadan's manufacturer will be providing farmers with more information about how registration has been changed and limits to the pesticide's use. A communications plan was required by the federal agency's carbofuran ruling.

"These registration changes will mean grasshopper control will likely cost more," notes Dolinski. "While there are alternatives on the market, Furadan has been the cheapest and most effective product on the market. With the start of the grasshopper build-up cycle, farmers will have to look to other control alternatives."

Contact: ***Mike Dolinski***
(403)427-7098

A cold end to 1995

There's a four-letter description for December 1995 says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist: C-O-L-D.

"The average temperature was 2.4 degrees below normal," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch. "And, total precipitation was 79 per cent of normal," he adds. These averages are based on data recorded at 29 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

The average monthly temperature for December was -14.1°C, 2.4 degrees below the long term average of -11.7°C.

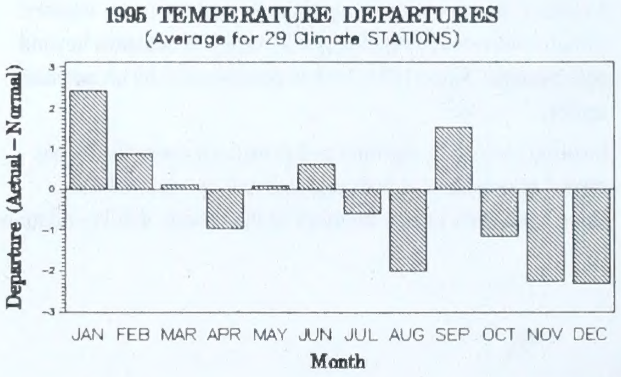
"Most Alberta locations reported temperatures one to three degrees below normal," he notes. "The greatest departure from a normal month temperature was reported in Brooks. The southern Alberta location's average of -15.1°C was 4.9 degrees colder than its normal."

Fort McMurray reported a -15.9 degree average, one of only two stations to report above normal temperatures. That was 2.5 degrees warmer than the monthly normal temperature of -17.4°C.

"Below normal precipitation during the month was only 4.8 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 22.4 mm. Most locations across the province reported below normal precipitation totals, although amounts varied from 4 to 28 mm, or 15 to 178 percent of normal," he says. December is usually the fifth driest month of the year.

The Peace River region recorded the most precipitation with amounts between 13 and 43 mm, or 66 to 159 per cent of the December monthly normal. In agricultural areas, Grande Prairie received the most precipitation during the month, reporting 42.9 mm or 159 per cent of its long term average.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)422-4385


1995 TEMPERATURE DEPARTURES
(Average for 29 Climate STATIONS)

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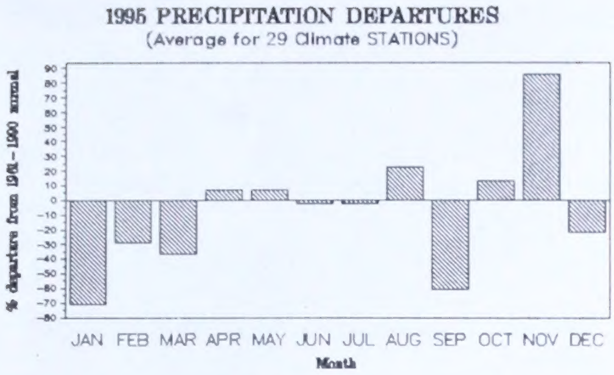

1995 PRECIPITATION DEPARTURES
(Average for 29 Climate STATIONS)

1995 weather challenged Alberta farmers

While 1995's provincial average temperature and precipitation paint one story of the year's weather, monthly and regional data give a better picture of the weather's impact on the province's farmers says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"Alberta's 1995 average annual temperature was cooler than normal and total precipitation was near normal. These averages are based on data recorded at 29 Environment Canada climate stations across the province," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch.

The average annual temperature in 1995 was 0.4°C cooler than the average for 1961 to 1990. The climate stations averaged 433.1 mm of precipitation, 25.3 mm below the long term average.

"Although the provincial averages present a simple overall picture of what happened, the details in the monthly data help us understand the type of year it was," he adds.

From a crop perspective, 1995 was cool and wet he explains. Most regions received significant rains in June, July and August providing adequate moisture for crop growth. However, below normal temperatures during the summer slowed crop growth and development.

"Many parts of the province had conditions very different from what the provincial averages show," add Dzikowski. "For example, the annual total precipitation at Lloydminster was 310.9 mm, 69 per cent of its long term average. This was typical for most of the northeastern agricultural region."

In contrast, Cardston received more than twice that amount of precipitation, some 757.6 mm. This was 139 per cent of the southwestern location's 1961 to 1990 average. Most of the southern region reported above normal precipitation amounts in 1995.

For the province as a whole, the year began with three months of above normal temperatures. [See graph following this article.] April was cool, while May and June were near to above normal providing good heat for crop germination and growth. July and August were the opposite, with cool, dull weather raising concerns of a late crop and the risk of frost damage reducing quality.

Warm sunny weather returned in September providing excellent weather for the late harvest. The first widespread frost occurred between September 18 and 21, about one week later than the average first fall frost date.

Precipitation was below normal for the first three months of 1995 [See graph following this article]. January was dry with an average of 6.8 mm, 29 per cent of the long-term average. February and March were also extremely dry.

"Precipitation was above normal in April and May when the crops needed the water to get established. However, the rain slowed down seeding," notes Dzikowski.

June and July precipitation totals were slightly below normal. June was the wettest month of 1995, with an average of 77.3 mm of rain, 98 per cent of the monthly June normal. "But a cool, wet August raised concerns about too little heat for crop development during the critical grain filling stage," he notes.

Below normal precipitation in September combined with above normal temperatures, provided excellent harvest weather.

The year ended with two months of cold, snowy weather. November snowfall accumulations were almost twice the long-term average. December was cold, but precipitation totals were below normal.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)422-4385

ARTI accelerates into '96

Last year nearly one-third of Alberta's seeded crop acres, nearly six million acres, were direct seeded. In 1996, it's expected another 600,000 acres will be added to that total.

"These statistics are a real encouragement to the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) partners," says program manager Peter Gamache.

ARTI was formed in the fall of 1994 to provide programs, activities and information to accelerate adoption of reduced tillage, direct seeding and or continuous cropping practices in the province.

The ARTI partnership includes agricultural organizations, industry and government with a common philosophy about the resulting conservation, production and economic benefits from reduced tillage.

During its first year, ARTI sponsored events reached over 4,800 people. This included 51 reduced tillage and direct

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seeding workshops, three provincial direct seeding demonstration days and other tours, workshops and demonstrations.

ARTI partners also began developing a series of interrelated direct seeding factsheets, completed a needs assessment and began database development.

"Partners and staff alike recognize much of what has been accomplished is the result of efforts by many local groups and individuals," says Russ Evans, chair of ARTI's steering committee.

"Many farmers also shared their knowledge and expertise at ARTI events throughout the year. ARTI appreciates the willingness of these local groups to let the initiative partner with them to further the soil conservation cause," he adds. Evans is also manager of the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), one member of the ARTI partnership.

ARTI activities will continue in 1996. "We already have events scheduled into June," notes Gamache. This includes a return of the provincial direct seeding days, reduced tillage summerfallow demonstrations, direct seeding on-farm trials, reduced tillage/direct seeding workshops and summer farm tours.

For more information, contact the regional conservation co-ordinator in your area: Dale Chrapko in Vermilion at (403)853-8109, Rob Dunn in Lethbridge at (403)381-5119, Ben Froebel in Barrhead at (403)674-8306, Russel Horvey in Red Deer at (403)340-5329 or John Zylstra in Fairview at (403)835-2291.

"ARTI provides support and funding for workshops, meetings, demonstrations, tours, program planning, speakers, advertising, printed materials and program costs," says Gamache. For more information, about this support contact Gamache in Edmonton at (403)422-4385.

Information about events and funding is also available from ARTI partners. Foundation partners are Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), Alberta Prairie Care/Ducks Unlimited, Conservation 2000, Monsanto, Olds College and Sherritt Fertilizers. Contributing partners are DowElanco, United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and Western Co-operative Fertilizers.

Contact: Peter Gamache
(403)422-4385

Conservation and technology combined in AgriFuture Expo

Three days of conservation workshops and the latest in farm technology are featured at the *AgriFuture Expo* Feb. 22 through 24 in Red Deer.

"Our provincial conservation workshop has expanded into much more," says workshop co-ordinator Randy Bjorklund. "Along with expert speakers and panels, the three-day event also has a giant indoor trade show featuring direct seeding and the latest in farm technology."

For the second consecutive year, the last day of the expo is *Direct Seeding Saturday* sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI). "This day puts a special emphasis on the how-tos and advantages of direct seeding," notes Bjorklund.

Opening the expo is keynote speaker Dick Dawson. Dawson, who retired as Cargill vice-president in 1993, will discuss international agriculture trade and sustainability in Canadian agriculture.

Also featured on Feb. 22 is plenary speaker Dwayne Westfall from Colorado State University. His topic is managing the move to more intensive cropping.

Plenary sessions on day two are on granular herbicides in direct seeding systems and landscape farming on a watershed basis. There's also a session on the new realities posed by the end of the WGTA.

"More than 20 different concurrent sessions are on the program," says Bjorklund. "Participants can choose from sessions offered during three periods during the first two days of the program."

Repeated topics include fertilization in intensive cropping, sustainable crop rotations, direct seeding peas and other pulses, ins and outs of forages with direct seeding, best water quality management practices for feedlots, solving salinity through cropping, weed control in reduced and zero tillage, and site specific farming. Offered only during the first concurrent session is integrating wildlife habitat into agricultural landscapes.

"Most of these sessions feature farmers as well as researchers or extension workers," he notes.

The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) will hold its 18th annual meeting on Feb. 23.

Full workshop, two-day, one-day and student registration rates are available. Full workshop registration includes a supper and social on Feb. 22 as well as the trade show. To register by telephone, call ACTS at 1-800-251-6846.

For more information about the AgriFuture Expo, contact Bjorklund in Edmonton at (403)422-4385 or Russ Evans in Calgary at (403)934-6911 or 1-800-251-6846.

Contact: Randy Bjorklund
(403)422-4385

Northwest food processors challenged by Taste of Success

Food processors in the northwest region can put their products to a unique *Taste of Success* challenge.

The challenge comes from Alberta Agriculture rural development specialists. "*Taste of Success* is part of an overall initiative to enhance and improve value-added processing in the northwest," says Kerry Engel, the Westlock-based specialist.

"*Taste of Success* provides the region's food processors with an opportunity to have valuable and costly evaluations done on their products," she adds.

The challenge is open to any type of human food product produced in an inspected kitchen. The entry deadline is Feb. 12 and the entry fee is $30.

"If your product isn't from an inspected kitchen, please call me to discuss your options," she notes. Engel can be reached in Westlock at (403)349-4465, and that's toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Products entered in the *Taste of Success* will undergo a sensory evaluation as well as a general product evaluation. Processors must be able to supply enough product for the sensory evaluation, about 50 small samples. Staff from the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc will facilitate this evaluation.

Processors also must supply a display for the product evaluation. "This should include promotional material, photos, business cards and other display materials," explains Engel.

As well, each participating processor can attend a pre-competition visual marketing seminar about promotional and other business materials.

"This is great value for the $30 entry fee, plus you have the opportunity to win a nutrition label for your product," she adds. The nutrition label includes a chemical analysis and is worth about $150.

For more information, contact Engel in Westlock at (403)349-4465, Gail Lemke in Stony Plain at (403)963-6101 or Janice McGregor in Morinville at (403)949-4351. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

MAP to agricultural policy discussions

Mastering your markets is the theme of the *1996 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP'96) Conference*, but the three-day management conference also promises thought-provoking sessions about agricultural policies and philosophies.

Among the more than 20 concurrent sessions offered at MAP'96 Jan. 30 through Feb. 1 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer, are a discussion of water, environment and land use and a presentation titled, "Who benefits from agriculture policy." Both are offered twice on the first day of the conference.

Starting with the global perspective, Dennis Phillippi will outline how water quality and usage, range land reforms and endangered species legislation elsewhere may affect Canadian producers.

"Mr. Phillippi has more than a quarter century of experience in natural resource management," says Doug Barlund, 1996 MAP conference chair. "He also has helped put together more than 200 conservation plans with grazing systems on private land."

Also on the program is Chris Lind, an author and professor from Saskatchewan. Last year he published **Something's Wrong Somewhere! – Globalization, Community and the Moral Economy of the Farm Crisis**. Lind has been a professor of church and society at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon since 1985.

"At MAP'96, Lind will discuss how agricultural policy has been developed historically, whether it's worked and whether global competition and advanced technology will change agricultural policy decisions," notes Barlund.

MAP'96 program topics cover a variety of farm business management subjects including a major focus on marketing. Keynote speakers are agriculture futurist Lowell Catlett on day one and Larry Martin, well-known Canadian agricultural economist, on day two. Catlett will look to the future, while Martin will discuss Canada's ability to compete in the internal agricultural marketplace.

MAP is Western Canada's premiere conference on leading-edge farm management issues and is dedicated to *smart farming*.

Daily and conference registration packages are available for individuals or for couples. There's also a special promotion for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) beginning farmer incentive clients.

Conference information is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices and AFSC offices across the province. Registration and conference details are also available through the MAP hotline by calling 1-800-387-6030 or on the Internet at poole@agric.gov.ab.ca.

Contact: Doug Barlund
(403)556-4245

Agri-News briefs

Conservation in the urban landscape seminar Jan. 20

An afternoon seminar Jan. 20 features a discussion of conservation in the urban landscape. The free seminar is sponsored by the Alberta Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Seminar speakers include three officials from the City of Edmonton. Ed Reed will outline the city's water conservation program, John Helder's topic is park naturalization and public involvement and Chris Saunders will discuss backyard insect management. Heather Gerling, Alberta Agriculture land reclamation specialist, will describe native prairie restoration and Anne Smrecui, of Wild Rose Consulting, will explain using native plants in home landscaping. The seminar will be followed by a dinner and the annual meeting of the society. To register for the seminar, contact Russ Wells at (403)427-0708, fax (403)422-0712 or e-mail wells@lisd.env.gov.ab. ca or John Laarhuis at (403)427-5570 or fax (403)422-0454.

Windows for Grocers for Jan. 26

Delegates to the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors western regional conference will discuss future technology for the industry on Jan. 26 in Calgary. Conference topics include the trends of how consumers are adopting technology, marketing on Internet and enhancing partnerships with technology. For more information, contact Bryan Walton in Calgary at (403)250-6608.

Goat events Jan. 27 and Feb. 17

The Western Chevon Coop will be holding a meeting on the afternoon of Jan. 27 in Red Deer. For more information, contact Pat Fuhr in Stony Plain at (403)963-4843. Alberta Goat Breeders Association members are also invited to the cheesemaking seminar in Camrose on Feb. 17. Registration for members is $50 and $75 for non-members. Pre-registration is a must. For more information, contact Lesley Jackson in Calmar at (403)985-3863 or Jackie Riley in Tofield at (403)662-2377.

Swine Stockhandler's Workshop Jan. 23 in Olds

Optimizing natural mating and artificial insemination (AI) is the subject of an afternoon swine stockhandler's workshop Jan. 23 in Olds. With the rapid expansion of AI and increasing pressure to optimize breeding management with natural mating, this workshop puts participants in contact with some of the world's leaders in breeding management. The workshop features Christianne Glossop from the U.K. and George Foxcroft from the University of Alberta's Alberta Pork Research Centre. Glossop's topic is timing and technique, the essentials of good breeding. Foxcroft will discuss making sense of boar and sow behavior in the breeding barn. Registration is $20. Fax and phone registrations will be accepted. For more information, contact Art Lange in Edmonton at (403)427-5096 or fax (403)427-1439. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Food industry conference Feb. 5-6

The 16th annual Western Canadian Economic Conference on the Food Industry runs Feb. 5 and 6 in Calgary. The conference has been expanded in 1996 to include a trade show and a pre-conference session. The emerging entrepreneur session runs from 3 to 5 p.m. on Feb. 5. That evening the conference opens with David Elton, president of the Canada West Foundation, discussing the new economy. Tuesday morning includes two looks at change and opportunities in the food industry – coping strategies in different sectors and what the future means for consumers, retailers, distributors and processors. Afternoon select-a-session choices include the power of electronic data interchange (EDI) and bar coding in the grocery channel; supply chain management; required new skills; changing customers' service and demands; and, the changing role for marketing boards and supply management. Separate registration packages are available for the emerging entrepreneur session, for trade fair exhibitors, to agricultural college and university students, and to three or more persons from one organization. For more information about the conference or to register, contact the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) in Edmonton at (403)451-5959 or fax (403)452-5385.

Cont'd on page 7

Seed cleaning plant association 43rd annual convention

The Association of Alberta Co-op Seeding Cleaning Plants will hold its 43rd annual convention Jan. 18 through 20 in Edmonton. Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development minister, is scheduled to give the opening address. The convention theme is positive changes and the program features discussions of the Olds College seed and grain technology program, general insurance and the post-Crow grain economy. For more information, contact Bill Witbeck in Lacombe at (403)782-4641.

Border City Seed Show and Crop Visions '96 Feb. 12-13

Lloydminster Exhibition Association will host both the Border City Seed Show and Crop Visions '96 Feb. 12 and 13. Entry closing date for the seed show is Jan. 26. Crop Visions includes sessions on bio-technology, agriculture environmental issues and pesticide residues, biological weed control, spring stored moisture, marketing opportunities, transportation issues and transgenetics. For more information, contact Michael Sidoryk in Lloydminster at (306)825-5571.

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AGRI-NEWS

January 22, 1996

Sponsors on-line with innovative farm safety guide

A long-time farm safety partnership has connected in another innovative way to promote safety to rural children.

TransAlta Utilities and NOVA Corporation are the major sponsors of an electronic version of the former **A Child's Guide to Farm Safety** booklet. Each sponsor is contributing $50,000 to developing an interactive software program that promotes the same concepts as the guide.

"Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program is excited to renew our partnership in this dynamic new format," says Jacqueline Galloway, farm safety consultant. [See separate story for more details.]

"Being involved in a first-of-its-kind project is a thrill," says Judy Stiell of TransAlta. "Over the years through this partnership, we've been able to promote farm safety to young Albertans very successfully. TransAlta anticipates using this technology will be an extremely effective way for rural students to take the farm safety message to heart."

"Here at NOVA, we believe in the investment we've made in our province's youth. Taking a leading-edge approach to farm safety is another way to confirm our commitment to encouraging children to be aware of farm safety," says Dan VanKeeken of NOVA.

Project sponsorship includes providing individual prizes and a grand prize to participating schools. Each school that submits contest entries will receive a copy of the software program and one will win a CD-ROM system. The top 10 students' entries, whose work will be featured in the CD-ROM software, also will receive prizes.

"The contest will run this spring and we expect the software to be ready for release in early 1997," says Galloway.

Contact: *Jacqueline Galloway*
(403)427-2171
Judy Stiell
(403)267-4930
Dan VanKeeken
(403)421-2686

Farm safety guide going electronic

A long-time farm safety program resource is moving into the electronic communications age.

The **Child's Guide to Farm Safety** started 18 years ago as a connect-the-dot, coloring book and evolved into a full-color comic book with more sophisticated exercises. By early next year, it will be interactive CD-ROM software.

"Moving to interactive software is the next logical step, given the leading-edge and innovative multi-media approach the arm

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Sponsors on-line with innovative farm safety guide 1
Farm safety guide going electronic 1
Alberta and B.C. eliminate double branch inspection fees 2
Second RCMP livestock investigator hired 2
Marketing strategy takes on the U.S. Northwest 3
Going from kitchen to market in the food business 3
Invest in yourself at entrepreneur's conference 4
Direct Seeding Saturday II Feb. 24 5
Briefs 5

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safety program has taken. As well, multi-media technology has proven to be a powerful learning tool," says Jacqueline Galloway, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development farm safety consultant.

The interactive software project will incorporate many of the same elements as the previous guides including sponsors and the concept of reaching children through their peers.

"TransAlta Utilities and NOVA Corporation are continuing their roles as major sponsors," notes Galloway. "Both companies felt it was important to continue their commitment to the health and safety of rural students."

As with previous guides, the interactive software will feature student artwork and stories. "We're very excited that the children-teaching-children concept will remain part of the new approach. It also provides an opportunity for a contest," she says.

The contest will be announced shortly. It will run between March and the end of the school year. Rural students will be invited to submit farm safety drawings and stories that will be used in the software program.

"We'll also be able to award both the students and their schools," she says. The top 10 entries will be used in the new software. Every school that makes a contest submission will receive a copy of the software, and one will win a CD-ROM system.

Contact: Jacqueline Galloway
(403)427-2171

B.C. and Alberta eliminate double brand inspection fees

Duplicate fees for livestock brand inspections in Alberta and British Columbia have been eliminated through a new livestock agreement between the two provinces.

Walter Paszkowski, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and David Zirnhelt, B.C. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said the new agreement reflects ongoing efforts to reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

"I am pleased that, with the signing of this agreement, the four western provinces no longer have double brand inspection fees for livestock sales," says Paszkowski. "The elimination of this trade barrier will make Alberta an attractive place to sell cattle, and benefit the entire western livestock industry."

Western premiers agreed at their 1993 conference that double inspection fees were a trade barrier that should end. Alberta signed an agreement with Saskatchewan in July 1995 to abolish double fees. Manitoba doesn't inspect livestock brands.

"This is a positive change which B.C. cattle producers had asked us to make," says Zirnhelt. "The agreement will provide cost-savings for producers in both provinces and save B.C. producers one dollar for each animal shipped for sale in Alberta."

Legislation had required cattle moved between the two provinces be inspected in both. With the new agreement in place, cattle shipped directly for sale to the other province will only incur one inspection fee in the province of origin.

Over the last three years, an average of 139,700 animals were inspected annually before shipments could cross the B.C./Alberta border. In 1994, Alberta producers shipped approximately 7,000 cattle to B.C.

Contact: Cliff Munroe (403)427-4241
Cindy Stephenson (604) 356-2862

Second RCMP livestock investigator hired

A second RCMP livestock investigator has been hired to further safeguard the province's $2.2 billion cattle industry.

The hiring was announced Walter Paszkowski, minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Corporal Tim Woods, a 22-year RCMP officer, will be responsible for criminal livestock investigations in the northern part of Alberta. He starts work, next Monday, January 29, at RCMP K Division headquarters in Edmonton.

Woods was raised near Truro, Nova Scotia, and was involved in the cattle industry until he joined the RCMP. He spent two years of police duty on horseback with the RCMP Musical Ride. For most of his career, Woods has been stationed in rural Alberta posts, with his most recent posting the Stony Plain detachment.

The position of RCMP livestock investigator was reinstated in early 1995, and was filled by Corporal Emil Smetaniuk, who works out of the Stockmen's Centre in Calgary.

The high volume of cattle movement within Alberta's vast land area makes it possible for livestock rustlers to ply their trade. The number of cattle and horses reported missing or stolen in 1995 increased by more than 500 over 1994.

"The Ministry of Agriculture is committed to safeguarding the cattle industry, which plays a vital role in Alberta's economy," says Paszkowski. "Sharing the crime workload between two officers will allow more time for involvement in the Rural Crime Watch program, assisting the meat inspection branch in prosecution of illegal slaughter cases, and working with AFRD brand inspectors."

In 1987, when the RCMP cut costs dramatically, all of the five RCMP livestock investigator positions in Alberta were abolished.

Cont'd on page 3

A study in 1994, carried out by the Alberta Solicitor General, the RCMP, Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Cattle Commission, indicated the need for full-time criminal livestock investigators. Alberta accounts for 64 per cent of Canada's fed cattle production and 57 per cent of the country's slaughtered cattle.

Smetaniuk and Woods are contracted by Alberta Agriculture's livestock marketing services branch. The branch's cattle inspectors checked 4.52 million cattle and 62,700 horses in 1995. The number of cattle reported missing or stolen last year totalled 1,786, compared to 1,225 in 1994. Some 235 head of cattle were found in 1995 as well as 45 horses.

"Alberta's brand inspection program is known to be one of the finest," says Paszkowski. "With two criminal livestock investigators on duty, thefts will be investigated and cattle rustlers brought to justice sooner."

Contact: *Ron Glen/Brian Hlus* *(403)427-2137* *Cliff Munroe* *(403)427-4241*

Marketing strategy takes on the U.S. Northwest

Alberta is strengthening its marketing efforts by sending a representative to the United States for two years.

Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development minister, recently announced the department's director of marketing services will be posted to the Vancouver, Washington area (near Portland). Cliff Wulff will start his new duties there on April 1, 1996.

The Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) is located in the area. WUSATA is the export promotion arm of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture (WASDA), an association of 14 states' agriculture departments.

"Alberta has the opportunity to reach its target of a $20 billion value added industry, but only if we have strong export growth, especially in value added products," says Paszkowski.

The United States is Alberta's major agriculture and food market. In 1994, export shipments totalled $1.88 billion. The Northwest United States is a key market for Alberta products, so the Pacific Northwest presented the best location to assist exporters.

The posting will be for a two-year trial period only, ending August 1998. The effectiveness of the operation will be fully assessed to ensure that the program is performing well.

Wulff will be responsible for developing market information about industry opportunities and resulting research needs. His duties will include market development and research support for Alberta producers and companies. He will also identify trends, key players and key contacts in the Western United States agriculture and food industry, information which can help form programs and policies to make Alberta's industry even more market-driven. All of this information will be available to Alberta's suppliers and potential suppliers.

The Northwest United States is an important region because of its large population base and its relatively high income levels. Studies have also determined that consumers in this region are very receptive to new products – good news for innovative Alberta exporters.

Alberta's regulatory environment could also be brought into greater harmony with that of the western states to further encourage north/south trade. Further, the office will work with state governments in the region, and their agencies to help facilitate two-way trade in agriculture and food products. Brand inspection procedures and regulations could be streamlined to assist exports as Alberta is the dominant beef and cattle producing area for that region.

"This pilot project will not require any new funding. Resources will be reallocated from production and marketing sectors' existing budget," notes Paszkowski. "We are trying to find ways to use existing dollars more effectively and fit the changing role of government. With this representative, government will be facilitating market development, not driving it."

Costs for operating out of Vancouver, Washington are estimated in the range of $65,000 to $75,000 annually and will be covered under existing budgets.

"This posting will further improve relations between the Western United States and Alberta," adds Paszkowski. "It will be considered a significant commitment by the Government of Alberta in the eyes of our industry's clients and the Pacific Northwest States to further develop opportunities created by free trade in agriculture and food products."

Contact: *Brian Hlus/Ron Glen* *(403)427-2137*
Barry Mehr *(403)427-2442* *Cliff Wulff* *(403)427-4241*

Going from kitchen to market in the food business

If you're interested in developing a food business, one of four seminars could help you move from your kitchen and into the marketplace.

One-day *Developing Your Food Business* seminars will cover the how-tos in getting started in the food business. They will be held in Three Hills on Feb. 6, in Wetaskiwin on Feb. 8, in Killam on March 6 and in Vegreville on March 23.

Cont'd on page 4

"All four seminars have the same program," says Margo Lawrence, Alberta Agriculture rural development specialist in Camrose and one of the seminar organizers. Her co-organizers are Jackie Anderson in Three Hills and Leona-Reynolds Zayak in Vermilion. Regulations and food safety topics will be covered by health inspectors from the particular area. "This is an opportunity to meet your local health inspector, learn how they can help you and about the regulations they enforce," she says.

In the other morning session, one of the three rural development specialists, will speak about quality first. Their focus will be on how to highlight quality in product promotion.

Labelling regulations will start off the afternoon program. Two Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada food officers will outline label requirements.

How to get products to market and alternative product promotion ideas will be covered by agri-food development consultant Joyce Lencucha along with Anderson, Lawrence or Reynolds-Zayak. In another session, Lencucha will share practical tips on developing a business image.

"We're also scheduled networking time so participants can share their product label, package or business cards," notes Lawrence.

Seminar registration is $20 plus GST. For more information, contact Anderson in Three Hills at (403)443-8525, Lawrence in Camrose at (403)679-1210 or Reynolds-Zayak in Vermilion at (403)853-8101. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Jackie Anderson
(403)443-8525
Margo Lawrence (403)679-1210
Leona Reynolds-Zayak (403)853-8101

Invest in yourself at entrepreneur's conference

Small and home-based business entrepreneur's, take note – the 4th annual *Entrepreneur's Development Conference* offers two-days of hands-on ways to enhance your skills.

The conference runs Feb. 22 and 23 in Red Deer. Participants can follow one of three program streams.

"There's something for entrepreneurs who are just getting started and another workshop focuses on managing your venture. The third is something new for 1996, an effective display techniques workshop, on Thursday followed by an 'organization plus' session on Friday," says Joyce Lencucha, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development agri-food development consultant and one of the workshop organizers.

The getting started workshop features two Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialists. Rural development specialist Lynn Stegman will explore where ideas come from for home based businesses.

Randi Sandbu, a development officer in the processing industry division, will discuss making connections and networking. "Randi will present this session to all three workshop streams," notes Lencucha.

Other topics in the getting started workshop include creative capital, projecting a professional image, building your business, crime prevention for home-based business and seven steps to a money making system.

The second workshop stream, managing you entrepreneurial venture, features how to identify practical business strategies, tax tips and investment strategies, how to do business on the information highway and salesmanship.

Rosemary Stefaniuk, a visual presentation and display specialist, provides her expertise in the one-day effective display techniques workshop. "The workshop will be especially of interest to people who market their products and services at trade shows and Farmers' Markets," says Lencucha.

"The conference also features successful Alberta business people as luncheon speakers," she adds.

Rhona and Robyn MacKay, of MacKay's Cochrane Ice Cream Ltd., will be in the spotlight on day one. The sisters were jointly named 1994 Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by the University of Toronto.

Calgary Stampeder turned sporting goods retailer John Forzani will speak on day two. His Calgary-based company, the Forzani Group, sells sporting goods under six different store fronts each in a different niche of the market.

Two-day conference registration is $135 with separate rates for Thursday or Friday only. Tickets for luncheons with the guest entrepreneurs are also available. For a conference brochure or registration information, call the Alberta Agriculture Red Deer district office at (403)342-5364.

The conference is presented in partnership by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Economic Development and Tourism, and the Centre for Business Development.

Contact: Joyce Lencucha
(403)340-5358
Lori Ouellette (403)342-2055
Rose Chalut (403)340-2055

Direct Seeding Saturday II Feb. 24

Direct Seeding Saturday returns as the wrap-up to the conservation workshop component to AgriFuture Farm Technology Expo.

"This is the finale to three-days of a giant indoor trade show featuring direct seeding along with other up-to-date farm technology along with information sessions highlighting a variety of conservation and sustainable agriculture issues," says workshop co-ordinator Randy Bjorklund.

The expo starts Feb. 22 and winds up Feb. 24. The final day is *Direct Seeding Saturday*. It is sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI).

A global perspective on direct seeding will kick-off the *Direct Seeding Saturday* workshop. Speaker John Hebblethwaite is executive director of the Conservation Technology Information Centre (CTIC) in Indiana.

Weed control and herbicide strategies as well as anhydrous ammonia in direct seeding are two production-related sessions. As well, the long-term effects of direct seeding will be discussed by researcher Wayne Lindwall and producer Spencer Hilton.

"The workshop has always featured producers who use conservation practices. *Direct Seeding Saturday* follows that tradition," says Bjorklund. "In particular, three farmers from different parts of the province will be interviewed about how they direct seed by Dianne Finstad of RDTV," he adds.

The farmers are Ken Farion of Vegreville, Cam Hancock of Marwayne and Stewart Collin of Foremost.

Following the information sessions, two-hours at the trade show are scheduled.

Full workshop registration includes *Direct Seeding Saturday*. There's a Saturday day rate of $25. This includes registration, proceedings and a trade show pass. To register by telephone, call ACTS at 1-800-251-6846.

For anyone unable to take in the workshop sessions, the trade fair runs throughout the expo. Daily registration for the trade show is $3 per person and $6 per family.

For more information about the AgriFuture Expo, contact Bjorklund in Edmonton at (403)422-4385, or Russ Evans in Calgary at (403)934-6911 or 1-800-251-6846.

Contact: *Randy Bjorklund*
(403)422-4385

Agri-News briefs

Swine industry schools continue at Olds College

A swine breeding and marketing management short course of one of three offerings coming in February and March through Olds College's *Swine Industry Schools*. The marketing and management course runs Feb. 6 and 7. On Feb. 28, there's a one-day swine worker occupational health and safety basic first aid and fire control course. Both will be held in Olds. A seminar on weaner, grower and finisher pigs is scheduled for March 13 in Westlock. Courses have been designed for Green Certificate students as well as producers. Fees for Green Certificate students are $65 for a one-day seminar and $95 for two-days. Regular registration is $95 for a one-day course and $125 for two-day courses. For more information about these and other livestock seminars, call Olds College Educational Development Centre at (403)556-8377.

Pulse crop update Feb. 7 in Lacombe

A one-day pulse crop update seminar will be held at the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Lacombe on Feb. 7. The program includes a report from the Alberta Pulse Commission. Agenda topics include a report on a Farming for the Future project, choosing a variety, pea feeding trial results, what's new in the industry, a market outlook, weed control and pulse crop development. The $10 registration fee includes lunch. For more information, contact the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office in Lacombe at (403)782-3301 or toll-free through the RITE network at 310-0000.

New-look and new name for farm organization

Unifarm is no longer and the Wild Rose Agriculture Producers has taken its place. Fine tuning the new organization will be the first priority of its inaugural board of directors. Ron Leonhardt was elected president. The seven member board includes first vice-president Alan Holt of Bashaw, second vice-president Paul Marshall of Delia and directors Verna Kett of Wainwright, Robert Filkohazy of Hussar, Dennis Herman of Bluffton and Paul Thibodeau of Taber. "We as an organization have the drive, the will power and the strength to stride proudly into the next century putting the needs and concerns of all producers before the decision-makers of this province and country. We are stronger for having come through this process of restructuring and we are hitting the hi-ways and bi-ways of Alberta to take this organization to every producer we can reach," says Leonhardt. The new organization represents Alberta farmers as well as a variety of farm organizations. For more information, contact Leonhardt at (403)451-5912.

Feeder Associations meets Feb. 9-10 in Edmonton

The Feeders Associations of Alberta will hold their 22nd annual convention Feb. 9 and 10 in Edmonton. The convention includes sessions for directors and staff, annual general meeting and discussion of resolutions. Also on the agenda is a market forecast and a panel discussion on current issues. Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development minister, is scheduled to speak to the group on Feb. 10. For more information, contact Rick Frederickson or Shirley Sommert-Ogden at (403)427-5096.

Community shared agriculture seminar Feb. 22

An afternoon seminar in Airdrie on Feb. 22 will answer questions about community shared agriculture (CSA). CSA is an agreement between a producer and consumers to share responsibility for food production. Consumers buy an up-front share of production and assume some of the risk. The $20 registration fee includes GST. For more information, contact Kathy Lowther Alberta Agriculture rural development specialist in Olds at (403)556-4220.

1996 Peace crop production seminars

One-day crop production seminars for Peace region producers will be held in three locations on successive days in early February. The Civic Centre in Sexsmith is the place on Feb. 6. The seminar moves to the Catholic Education Centre in Peace River on Feb. 7 and finishes at the Fort Vermilion curling rink on Feb. 8. Each seminar includes a market outlook and review of the Farm Income Stabilization Program (FISP), plus select-a-sessions on Internet, soil moisture management, products of questionable value, field pea trial results and production tips, integrated resource management, crop micro-nutrients in the Peace, transgenics in crops, weed control in forages, canola production tips, and common and not so common problems in field crops. Lunch and proceedings are included in the $20 fee. For more information, contact a Peace region crop specialist.

Dairy Congress forage competition closes Feb. 29

Entering the Alberta Dairy Congress forage competition is as easy as dropping off a sample at your nearest Alberta Agriculture district office. Entries close on Feb. 29. The congress runs June 6 through 8 in Leduc. There are six competition classes – legume hay, grass-legume hay, grass hay, haylage, cereal silage and export hay. There's no entry fee. For more information about entries and the contest, contact you local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office.

Talk canola, see Graceland

The 1996 joint convention of the Canola Council of Canada and the U.S. Canola Association will be held in Memphis, Tennessee March 3 through 5. The convention program includes the public's perception of biotechnology, an overview of the U.S. industry, potential of canola products with environmental applications, transgenics, and world demographics and canola markets. For more information about the convention or a registration form, contact Maureen Smit of the Canola Council of Canada in Winnipeg at (204)982-2103.

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AGRI-NEWS

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Rural Crime Watch Week Jan. 29-Feb.3

Rural Crime Watch Week starts today (Jan. 29) and runs through Feb. 3.

"This awareness week was designated to give the Rural Crime Watch program exposure in rural communities," says Cliff Munroe of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Munroe is the department's liaison with the Rural Crime Watch program.

As well, the week is an opportunity for local associations to conduct membership drives and make their communities more aware of the Rural Crime Watch program in their area. "Local organizations are encouraged to contact media in their area and hold events to profile their association," notes Munroe.

The only provincial event tied to the awareness week is the annual provincial Rural Crime Watch workshop. The workshop will be held in Calgary on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 2 and 3. Cochrane, Turner Valley and Okotoks Rural Crime Watch associations are the workshop hosts. Its theme is neighbors caring about neighbors. For more information about the workshop, contact Bill Bateman at (403)932-5428 or Jackie Chalmers at (403)931-3872.

Currently, nearly 50 community Rural Crime Watch associations in the province have a membership of approximately 30,000. The program started as a pilot project in 1979. Founding organizations included Alberta Agriculture, the Farmers' Advocate's office, the Alberta Cattle Commission, the Western Stock Growers' Association and the RCMP. Rural Crime Watch's goal is decreasing rural crime that affects farmers, ranchers, acreage owners and others who have a vested interest in rural communities.

Munroe notes Rural Crime Watch members act as the ears and eyes for the RCMP. Many organizations also have computer-fan out systems that allow members to receive direct communications from their local RCMP detachment. For more information, contact Lynn Roberts in Stony Plain at (403)470-0627 or Munroe in Edmonton at (403)427-4241.

Contact: *Cliff Munroe*
(403)427-4241

This Week

Rural Crime Watch Week Jan. 29-Feb. 1
CASP deadline Feb. 15 2
1995 quality high, production defies conditions 2
Feed peas hold centre stage 3
Feedgrain prices driven by U.S. corn 3
Canola export pace slow 3
Cattle markets weighed down by negatives 4
Water quality, fertilizer management horticulture workshop 4
Briefs 5

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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

CASP deadline Feb. 15

February is the 1996 application deadline for the Canadian Agriculture Safety Program (CASP).

"CASP's objective is to decrease the level of farm injuries and fatalities across Canada by providing project funding specifically for farm safety and rural health, " notes Eric Jones, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety specialist.

Eligible projects include promotional materials and activities, ways to monitor agriculture related deaths and health issues, farm health and safety prevention programs, safety standards, data gathering and analysis, and ways to exchange information about farm health and safety issues.

"Program guidelines give priority to projects that build on current national or provincial activities, that are broad-based and that highlight children," notes Jones.

Non-profit organizations, industry associations, corporations, universities, all levels of government, crown corporations and government agencies can apply for CASP funding.

CASP is administered by the Canadian Coalition for Agriculture Safety and Rural Health (CCASRH) on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada.

Application forms are available from Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program office in Edmonton by calling (403)427-2171. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Eric Jones* *(403)427-2171*

Jacqueline Galloway *(403)427-2171*

1995 quality high, production defies conditions

Despite floods in the south and drought conditions in the east, Alberta's 1995 crop production was down only four per cent from the record set in 1993, and crop quality was generally better than in 1994 says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development statistician.

"Compared to 1994, 1995 crop production increased nearly two per cent, " says Wendy Boje, of the market analysis and statistics branch.

The most notable increases were in wheat, barley, flaxseed, mixed grains, and peas. "These results were from a combination of excellent yields and acreage increases," she says.

Wheat yielded a record of 40.4 bushels per acre, 0.8 bushels per acre higher than 1993. Both barley and flaxseed recorded the second highest yields in history. Barley yielded 61.9 bushels per acre, compared to the 64.4 bushels per acre recorded in 1993. Flaxseed was at 23.3 bushels per acre this year, compared to 1993's 26.7 bushels per acre.

"Although canola acreage dropped 10 per cent, production dropped only two per cent. Yields were just a bushel and a half per acre less than the record yield of 25.9 bushels per acre set in 1993," explains Boje.

Quality surveys conducted by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Wheat Pool, and the Canadian Wheat Board all estimate approximately 50 per cent of Alberta's 1995 wheat crop will grade Number 1.

"This is up slightly from 1994, and is considerably higher than the five and ten year average of 25 per cent. This trend also extended to barley," she adds. Roughly 30 per cent of barley is expected to grade Select, a substantial increase from the five and ten year average of 10 per cent.

Canola quality is down slightly with approximately 65 per cent grading Number 1 compared with the five and ten year average of 73 per cent. "This grade decrease is a result of high green seed content levels in the 1995 canola crop," she notes.

"Another positive for Alberta producers has been improved prices. Combined with increased production, it's expected the 1995 farm market crop receipts will reach a record level," she says.

Cumulative receipts for the first nine months of 1995 indicate an increase of 22 per cent over the comparable period in 1994. This increase occurred despite extreme weather conditions and the removal of the WGTA.

Forage producers didn't fare as well. "1995 proved to be a challenging year for forage producers," says Boje. Cool spring temperatures prevented early pasture growth and thus producers were forced to continue feeding reserves from the previous year's hay crop."This left many producers with very little carry-over reserves for this winter," she adds.

Weather continued to plague forage production. Dry conditions delayed the first cut and then rain hampered baling resulting in quality losses. Sun in August and September yielded a higher yielding, better quality second cut. "However, the overall picture is bringing premium prices as hay prices are hitting their highest levels since 1988.

"The northeast area of the province appears to be the only area where supply could be a problem as all feed types are less than 50 per cent adequate," she adds. "All other regions appear to have at least adequate feed supplies."

Contact: *Wendy Boje* *(403)427-4011*

Feed peas hold center stage

Feed pea markets continue to hold centre stage in the special commodities markets says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"The market strength is in most part due to the global feedgrain market, and particularly the happenings within the European Union," says Matthew Machielse of the market analysis and statistics branch.

European feed users haven't had the luxury they enjoyed in the past with large feedgrain stock levels and cheaper feed substitutes such as soymeal and corn gluten pellets. Since September, relatively tight wheat and barley stocks have increased internal prices by $40 and $30 respectively. Soymeal pellet prices have increased by nearly $50/mt and gluten by nearly $40. "So, the Europeans are turning to feed peas," explains Machielse.

Canadian export demand isn't limited to European demand he adds. "Strong growth combined with industrialization of the Pacific Rim livestock sector is becoming an increasing factor."

For example, China, the world's largest swine producer, has an estimated 143 million hogs, and may become a significant feed user as commercial interests expand operations through joint ventures. China is currently trying to purchase Canadian feed peas for the first time.

"Two factors are limiting Chinese sales," he notes "First, European demand is overwhelming market participants. Secondly, the increased risk and cost of movement of funds through the letter of credit channels is working against the Chinese buyers."

On the domestic front, a rally in soymeal cash prices came to the rescue of domestic demand for feed peas. Least cost ration calculations estimate feed pea values have a significant economic advantage over imported soymeal values.

The equivalent feed pea value is estimated to be $236 per tonne when soymeal is priced at $335 per tonne in swine grower rations. This makes the feed cost advantage about five per cent less than a soymeal ration. "Hog producers should be taking advantage of this premium, given pea prices are well below this level on most of the Prairies and soymeal is unlikely to retreat." he says. Soymeal is currently valued closer to $350 per tonne in most Alberta feedmills.

In other commodities, the canaryseed market is setting up to take a run at the 27 to 30 cent per pound mark. Certain market conditions will be needed to make that happen he says. "Either demand will need to resurface or a trader caught short to get things heated up again. However, the combination of strong exports to date and reduced projected supplies in tight producer hands leads the way for higher farm gate prices."

Lentil producers holding lower quality Estons (number 3 grade) have finally been greeted with improved bid levels. Current offers of 12 cents per pound are a two cent increase from pre-Christmas levels. "This has narrowed the spread, but a further one half to one cent per pound improvement is possible," notes Machielse

Number 2 grades have also returned to plus 18 cents per pound on both Lairds and Estons. Sales are recommended at these levels he adds.

Contact: *Matthew Machielse*
(403)427-5387

Feedgrain prices driven by U.S. corn

With U.S. corn in the driver's seat, feedgrain markets moved steady to higher through December and early January says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"Corn usage in the U.S. market hasn't slowed enough to indicate supply rationing since the 1995 crop was 25 per cent smaller than '94 production," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch. " As well, dry conditions in Argentine and Brazilian corn growing regions kept futures well supported."

While the barley market will follow corn's lead, Dooley cautions Alberta producers that domestic barley fundamentals aren't anywhere near as positive as those for corn or for coarse grains in general.

Canadian barley production in 1995 was about one million tonnes above the five-year average. Carryover at the end of the current season will be near average levels. "Given these factors, if corn should fall, there would be little to support the local barley market," explains Dooley. However, he does forecast nearby western barley futures will edge somewhat higher in the next couple months and trade in a range from $175 to $190 per tonne.

Dooley also notes Chicago oats futures have some further upside potential. "Look for a futures trading range from about $2.20 to $2.45 per bushel over the next couple of months," he says.

Contact: *Al Dooley*
(403)427-5387

Canola export pace slow

Canadian canola exports through mid-December were down by almost 40 per cent from a year earlier according to preliminary statistics says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"Exports to the EU are particularly disappointing, with shipments to that region currently at just a third of last year's

Cont'd on page 4

pace. Record production in the EU and in China in 1995 are obviously playing a part in the slow export picture," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch.

"Despite slow exports and a potentially large crop carryover, canola prices have been following the strong soybean market," he adds.

Oilseed markets were mostly stronger through December. Support came mainly from soybeans and concerns about the South American soybean crop in particular. Dry conditions delayed seeding in the major Brazilian soybean growing state of Rio Grande do Sul and elsewhere, raising the possibility of lower yields. This comes when there is already concern about global soybean supplies as well as very tight stocks of coarse grains.

"Recent rains have taken some of the lustre out of the market in the short-term, but in the longer-term tight supplies will keep the market on edge at least until the South American soybean crops are harvested," he says.

"Canola and flaxseed prices will continue to respond if those South American crops are threatened," adds Dooley. "However, meal is driving the market this season, in sharp contrast to a year ago. This isn't so good for a relatively high oil content seed such as canola."

Barring real problems in South America, over the next two months, Dooley forecasts nearby canola futures to trade in a fairly narrow range from $415 to about $440 per tonne.

"In other words, not much change from the current situation. However, I believe new crop prices will strengthen further, reflecting bids in excess of nine dollars per bushel to the farmer. This should attract canola growers in 1996," he says.

Contact: Al Dooley
(403)427-5387

Cattle markets weighed down by negatives

Scrooge came to visit North American cattle markets in December says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"Both fed and feeder cattle products had a rough month," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch. "Fed cattle markets ended the year on a sour note, and after setbacks feeder cattle prices are at their lowest level since the mid-1980s.

"Scrooge also came to stay," he adds. "Feeder prices are expected to hold steady at the new lower levels and while fed prices may improve slightly in the first quarter, lower prices are likely in the second quarter."

U.S. slaughter cattle traded as low as $64/cwt. in late December and early January. Bountiful supplies of competing meats and large marketings of fed cattle kept the market on the defensive in December, causing steady fed cattle price drops. In Canada, wholesale/retail beef movement was even worse, judging by the large spread between Alberta and U.S. markets in December. "The $70 U.S. market that seemed within reach in November looks like a day dream now," says Gietz.

In Alberta, Gietz forecasts Alberta direct sale steer (ADS) prices to average $83/cwt. in February, see-saw up one dollar and back down one dollar in the next two months before falling to $78/cwt. in May and $75 in June. These forecasts are based on a 74 cent Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. dollar.

"1996 will also be a tough year for many feeder cattle producers," he says. "The most likely trend in 1996 feeder cattle markets is sideways. Mediocre fed cattle prices and high costs of gain are likely to be with us all year, keeping feeder cattle prices on the defensive. Prices holding near current levels through the coming year will bring financial stress to many feeder cattle producers.."

Lower prices might also affect beef herd growth in North America. Gietz says the next few inventory reports, beginning with the U.S. January 1 report, will play out that story.

One positive note is expected good demand for light grass cattle this winter and spring. "However, this is a relatively small segment of the total market. And even then, prices for grass cattle will be well below prices in previous years," he says.

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

Water quality, fertilizer management horticulture workshop

Horticulture growers can learn about water quality and fertilizer management at a specialized workshop on Feb. 14 in Edmonton.

"The workshop was designed for greenhouse crop growers, nursery and tree seedling growers, seed potato growers, fruit growers, interior landscapers and other water users, " says Mohyuddin Mirza, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development greenhouse specialist.

"Workshop participants will learn to interpret water quality, make management decisions to obtain better yields and learn the role of water in the working greenhouse environment," he adds. During the hands-on workshop, participants will also prepare fertilizer programs for many different types of plants.

There's limited space for the workshop, so pre-registration is required before the worksho. To reserve a space, call the Crop

Cont'd on page 5

Diversification Centre North in Edmonton at (403)422-1789. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Registration is $53.50 per person and includes GST. Cheques should be made payable to the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association, the workshop co-sponsor.

The workshop will be held at the Crop Diversification Centre North at 17507 Fort Road in Edmonton.

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
(403)422-1789

Agri-News briefs

'95 prosperous for Alberta lamb producers

Average farmgate prices for Alberta lamb followed a trend that was a minimum of $5/cwt. above 1994's levels says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst. "Price strength in December rounded off a prosperous year for Alberta lamb producers," says Don Hansen of the market analysis and statistics branch. In Edmonton, the pre-Christmas sale saw market lambs trade between $90.50 to $96/cwt, and averaging at $93.25/cwt. In the feeder lambs class (61 to 80 lbs.), prices ranged from $107.50 to $112/cwt. Alberta 's annual lamb and mutton production is around 2,000 tonnes, making up approximately 20 per cent of Canadian production. For more information, contact Hansen in Edmonton at (403)427-4011.

Three-part back door business planning series

A series of three one-day workshops in Three Hills and Olds will help entrepreneurs start a new venture or develop an existing one. The series starts in Three Hills on Feb. 6 with a developing your food business workshop. The second installment puts a focus on business and runs Feb. 13 in Three Hills. Both workshops are at Three Hills Provincial Building. The final workshop is in Olds and looks at practical marketing of your new venture. Registration for the complete series is $72 or $27 for any one of the workshops. Fees include GST and lunch. For more information, contact Jackie Anderson in Three Hills at (403)443-8525 or Kathy Lowther in Olds at (403)556-4220.

Missing the boat Barley Growers convention theme

Missing the boat is the theme of the 19th annual *Western Barley Growers Association* convention Feb. 15 and 16 at the Banff Park Lodge. The conference includes a transportation panel with invited guests from the two national railways. Also included on the panel is the trucking perspective. Another panel will look at the marketplace and has representatives from the feed, processing and export sector. A number of politicians and officials have been invited for a political bearpit sessions to discussion the Alberta plebiscite and Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) reform. For more information, contact the WBGA office in Calgary at (403)291-3620.

Environmental remediation symposium at Olds College Feb. 27

A one-day environmental remediation innovative ideas symposium will be held at Olds College on Feb. 27. Symposium topics include efficient wellbore pumping techniques, catalytic oxidation techniques, composting, earth sciences, biomechanics, flare pit remediation, wellsite decommissioning, and carbon, media and other filtration. For more information, contact Lori Fuchs at the Olds College Educational Development Centre at (403)556-8321.

Cont'd on page 6

AAAS convention in Lethbridge

The Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) will have constitution and bylaw amendments on its agenda at its annual general meeting in Lethbridge. The meeting is scheduled for the Lethbridge Lodge Feb. 16 through 18. Other meeting topics include event map-advertising, agriculture economic impact rubber stamp, the AAAS scholarship program and Internet access. For more information, contact Wendy Pruden in Edmonton at (403)427-2174.

REAs annual meeting and conference Feb. 7-9 in Edmonton

The Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations (REAs) will hold its annual meeting and conference Feb. 7 through 9 in Edmonton. More than 250 farmers representing REAS and utility-company direct farm consumers are expected. For more information, contact the provincial REA office in Edmonton at (403)454-7691.

Conservation workshop, farm technology expo Feb. 22-24

Three days of conservation workshops and the latest in farm technology are featured at the *AgriFuture Expo* Feb. 22 through 24 in Red Deer. For the second consecutive year, the last day of the expo is *Direct Seeding Saturday* sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI). The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) will hold its 18th annual meeting on Feb. 23. Full workshop, two-day, one-day and student registration rates are available. Full workshop registration includes a supper and social on Feb. 22 as well as the trade show. To register by telephone, call ACTS at 1-800-251-6846. For more information about the AgriFuture Expo, contact Bjorklund in Edmonton at (403)422-4385 or Russ Evans in Calgary at (403)934-6911 or 1-800-251-6846.

Entrepreneur's conference

Small and home-based business entrepreneur's, the 4th annual *Entrepreneur's Development Conference* offers two-days of hands-on ways to enhance your skills. The conference runs Feb. 22 and 23 in Red Deer. Participants can follow one of three program streams. Stream one is on getting started, stream two is about managing your venture and stream three starts with a full day effective display techniques workshop. Two-day conference registration is $135 with separate rates for Thursday or Friday only. For a conference brochure or registration information, call the Alberta Agriculture Red Deer district office at (403)340-5364.

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AGRI-NEWS

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Come "rope" the web with Alberta Agriculture

After a successful Internet pilot project, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has expanded its delivery of information and services on Internet.

Ropin' the Web has replaced *Project Barley*. "We've moved beyond just barley information," says project manager Ron Weisenburger. "The new project also reflects the message that our site has the ability to help users gather and tie information together to meet their needs."

To go with the new name, there's a new site address: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/**. The project team has also redesigned the home page, incorporated feedback from the pilot project and set priorities for what will be added to the site.

"If you've visited us before, you'll notice the new home page," he notes. One visible difference is the *Ropin' the Web* graphic. The new design also gives easy access to all agriculture, food and rural development areas the department provides information about.

The site also provides direct links to literally hundreds of other agriculture related sites around the world. One of the links is something close to home, the national electronic bulletin board system FBMInet.

"This alternative link to FBMInet is for users who now have to pay long distance charges to access the service," says Weisenburger. [See separate story on FBMInet.]

Newsgroups and direct e-mail access to department specialist are being emphasized in current project development. "Feedback from the pilot project was that people wanted these features," he says. "So, we're building clickable e-mail links to many department specialists." Users will be able to click on to any place where they see, "Ask the Expert".

Over the next several months the project team will begin adding information in priority areas. This includes information about other cereal crops besides barley, and beef and forages. "Currently there's at least 10 other areas within the department where information is being prepared for Internet delivery," he says.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is committed to the development of communications networks to improve delivery of its information and services. Development and use of Internet within the department and to our customers will be a priority direction for electronic delivery for the next few years," says Doug Radke, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's deputy minister.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Come "rope" the web with Alberta Agriculture 1

FBMInet now available on Internet 2

Try an on-line marketing club 2

Still time to order shelterbelt trees 3

Your safety innovation could be a national winner 3

Food safety line has been ringing 4

Handling, storing perishable foods takes care 4

Briefs 5

Coming agricultural events notice 7

Alberta
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"There will be an increased focus on partnering the development of information, especially through the use of Internet's capability to link to other organizations' information," he adds.

Because Internet access throughout the province is improving rapidly, the project team expects the site will gather more and more users. "We expect that all parts of Alberta will soon have toll-free Internet access. We will be working with the industry to increase the awareness and use of Internet across the province," says Darwin Daviduk, project co-manager.

Contact:	*Ron Weisenburger*	*Darwin Daviduk*
	(403)427-2417	*(403)427-2101*

FBMInet now available on Internet

The Farm Business Management Information Network (FBMInet), an electronic bulletin board system, can now be accessed over the Internet.

"Even though FBMInet has over 12,000 users now, an Internet connection enables it to reach a much larger audience," says Bruce Waldie, project co-ordinator based at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm business management branch in Olds.

"People who have an Internet account can now point their web browsers to **FBMInet.ca** and connect to the FBMInet World Wide Web server," he adds.

This connect will help eliminate long distance charges for FBMInet users who have a local Internet service provider. "Many rural communities now have Internet service providers, especially now that the federal Community Access Program is in operation," he notes.

"This Internet access is in addition to the more than 20 dial-up sites we already have across Canada," says David Thacker, FBMInet's national co-ordiantor.

"The Internet site is one more way to deliver farm management information to Canadian farm managers. It also allows people who don't have ready access to a modem, but do have Internet access, to connect to FBMInet and take advantage of the wide variety of information there," he adds.

The FBMInet Internet site includes a World Wide Web page and a Telnet service. "We chose Telnet because it looks and works almost exactly like FBMInet works over a dial-up connection," says Waldie. "People who are already FBMInet users will be able to use it the same way by Telnet without having to learn anything new."

A Telnet program is available on the web site for anyone who doesn't already have a suitable program.

To connect to the FBMInet web site, use the URL address: **http://FBMInet. ca**. If you have a Telnet program use: **telnet://FBMInet. ca**.

Over a quarter million calls have been made to FBMInet since it started over two and half years ago. FBMInet carries a wide range of information, from daily weather forecasts and database searches, to public and subscription sources of market, prices and commentaries.

"FBMInet users have told us many times that they like being able to access all this information in one place, rather than having to search all over for it," says Thacker. "This reinforces our saying, 'FBMInet – your first stop on the information highway'."

For more information about FBMInet, contact Waldie in Olds at (403)556-4243 or Thacker in Red Deer at (403)340-3822.

Contact: *Bruce Waldie*
(403)556-4243

Try an on-line marketing club

These club members have never met, but still are taking advantage of a popular and practical way to improve their marketing skills.

"This marketing club is on-line," explains Nan Barlett, a Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) regional representative. "Members learn and discuss ideas while sitting at home in front of their computers."

Rather than a local group of producers, this on-line club has 10 members from different parts of the province.

KenAgra Management Services, with support from FBMI, started the club in December to test how effective an electronic bulletin board system is as a training tool. The on-line marketing club is using FBMInet, a national bulletin board system with a farm management focus, to access information and to discuss markets.

Betty Ann Schur, who farms near Berwyn, is a club member. One morning each week she dials the Edmonton FBMInet node and downloads a newsletter prepared by KenAgra. Schur and her husband read the newsletter and discuss it. If they have any questions or comments to offer the rest of the group, they put them on the bulletin board for other members to answer or discuss.

While the club is new and she hasn't had time to really get into the system, Schur says she can see its benefits. "It's different than being in a classroom where you have to be there at a certain time," she says. She also likes seeing a variety of comments from producers from other parts of the province.

"We haven't changed our marketing yet, but it makes us keep up with the markets more," she says. "We're reading the

Cont'd on page 3

newsletter and watching the markets more. If you let it lag, you'll never get back at it."

Brenda Brindle, KenAgra market consultant, is the project leader. She says the on-line club has potential as more and more people are strapped for time to go out to a club meeting. "This is available 24 hours a day. When you have time or when you think about it, you can log on and ask the question or look for more information."

To date, club members haven't generated as much discussion as she'd hoped they would. So, Brindle has tried a different strategy. The newsletter has more questions for members to think about, such as items participants might be asked at a course.

Anyone interested in learning more about the on-line marketing course can contact Brindle toll-free at 1-800-465-2936 or in the Edmonton area call 468-4442.

Contact: *Nan Barlett* *(403)835-4288* *Brenda Brindle* *(403)468-4442*

Still time to order shelterbelt trees

The application deadline of March 1 is approaching, but there's still time to order trees and shrubs for farm and field shelterbelts.

"There's a good supply of most varieties, although a few have been sold out," says Brendan Casement, leader of Alberta Agriculture's agroforesty unit.

Application forms, a folder describing the program and booklet with pictures of available trees and shrubs are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices, municipal agriculture service boards, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) offices and the Crop Diversification Centre North in Edmonton.

"A shelterbelt is a beneficial addition to both farmsteads and fields," notes Casement. "Trees don't just look good around your yard, they can calm winds and reduce heating costs by a much as 10 per cent. As well, they stop dust and storms form reaching your home and farm buildings."

Soil conservation and snow trapping are two benefits of field shelterbelts. "The trees reduce wind velocity and so helps stop soil from blowing. Trapping snow can increase field moisture and add to crop yields," he adds.

While planting sites should be cultivated and kept weed free the year before tree seedlings are planted, it's still possible to put in a shelterbelt this spring.

This requires additional care, particularly with weed control. "Young plants can't compete with weeds. More plantings fail because of weed competition than for any other reason," explains Casement.

"You'll have to contend with perennial and annual weeds, so you'll need to use different strategies to control both types," he adds.

Treflan incorporated into the top three to five cm of the soil at twice the canola application rate will keep most annual weeds from growing. "However, it wouldn't control perennial weeds," he notes.

Casement suggests using a plastic weed barrier. It can be laid down at planting time and helps reduce weed competition. "It's expensive, but pays for itself in the long-run," he says

All trees and shrubs distributed through the program are produced by Alberta nurseries and greenhouses. The Crop Diversification Centre North takes the orders and distributes the tree seedlings.

For more information, contact Casement or Brian Breneman at (403)422-1789 in Edmonton. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Brendan Casement* *(403)422-1789*

Your safety innovation could be a national winner

Albertans should share their farm safety innovations with the nation says Alberta Agriculture's farm safety specialist.

"Whether it's something you did yourself, did as a family or did as a group such as a 4-H club, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture [CFA] wants to hear what you've done to prevent accidents on the farm," says Eric Jones. A similar contest has been successful in Quebec for several years, and is now going national in 1996.

Eligible innovations include any method of decreasing hazards associated with farm labor, any adaptions to make farm machinery safer, safeguards to protect health and safety of farm machinery users and innovative ways to improve farmers' health and safety.

"Your innovation will be judged by four criteria," notes Jones. They are the importance of the problem solved, originality, ease of application and overall effectiveness.

The entry deadline is June 20, 1996. "And the prizes are significant," adds Jones. Contest co-sponsor John Deere is offering a $1,000 gift certificate for first place, $500 for second place and $250 for third place.

Entries should be submitted to the CFA at Suite 101, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7.

Other contest sponsors are the Canada Safety Council, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Pioneer and Cyanamid.

Contact: *Eric Jones* *(403)427-2171* *Jennifer Higginson* *(613)236-3633*

Food safety line has been ringing

More than 1,400 callers have received an immediate benefit from the provincial *Food Safety Information Line*, but the project's benefits go much further says an Alberta Agriculture foods and nutrition specialist.

Since June 1995, Albertans have been able to call the toll-free line to get answers to their questions about food production and processing, food packaging and labelling, product shelf life, and safe storage and handling. The line is co-ordinated and managed by the Alberta Home Economics Association.

"The subject areas and specific questions have been documented. They're part of a growing database that serves as a window on trends and opportunities for Alberta's agri-food industries," says the Airdrie-based Suzanne Tenold.

Tenold compiles information from the line every month. She summarizes the data, by food commodity and characteristics, on a spreadsheet. This information can be used by the industry as well as food and nutrition professionals and health educators.

"Food safety is just one category of many question asked by callers to the line. Storage, handling and preparing various foods are also frequently asked," she notes. For the food industry and for health and nutrition professionals, the calls indicate types of information consumers may lack and challenges both to fill in the gaps.

"Industry is challenged to ensure practical storage information is easily available to their customers. For food and nutrition professionals, such as myself, the challenge is assuring consumers know and apply basic food safety principles in their homes," says Tenold. [See related story.]

Consumers also need to know Alberta's agriculture and agri-food industry operates under the strictest quality standards to provide safe, wholesome foods for consumers.

"Protecting the food supply is a partnership that starts with the producer and continues through to the consumer who handles and prepares the food," she explains. "The goodness of Alberta food products is ensured when consumers have access to reliable information about their production, storage and preparation."

Albertans with food safety questions can call the *Food Safety Information Line* at 1-800-892-8333 weekdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Calgary residents can dial 287-0098 directly.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
(403)948-8504

Handling, storing perishable foods takes care

While federal labelling regulations require most prepackaged foods to carry a *best before* or durable life date on the package, the responsibility of ensuring the food remains safe falls to the individual handling the food at home.

"Cleanliness and ontrolling temperature are the keys," says Suzanne Tenold, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development foods and nutrition specialist.

Bacteria are normally present in all foods, but usually aren't harmful at low levels. Two basic food safety principles are to keep food from other bacteria sources and to control temperature to prevent rapid bacteria growth.

"Start by keeping your hands, utensils and work place as clean as possible when you're handling food," she says. "Washing work areas, hands and utensils with hot soapy water is sufficient to keep bacteria levels low."

Food can easily pick up unwanted bacteria by cross contamination, in other words by contact with dirty hands or preparation surfaces. For example, when foods share a cutting boards or a serving plate, microorganisms from one food are spread to foods that touch the same surface. A typical situation could be barbecued hamburger patties put back on the same plate used to bring the raw ones to the barbecue.

When it comes to temperature follow this rule – **keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold**. Plus, there's a two-hour window rule of thumb for foods left at room temperature or in the danger zone between 4°C and 60°C (40° and 140°F).

"Many food poisoning bacteria can double in number every 15 minutes under ideal conditions. Perishable foods left in the danger zone longer than two hours should be discarded," she advises.

"Often there aren't any off odors or signs of spoilage to provide clues that microorganisms have had a chance to grow and multiply," she adds. "Just because you can't see or smell a problem, doesn't mean the food is safe."

Foods served hot should be kept above 60°C (140°C). Regular cooking temperatures are higher, usually between 74° and 100°C (165°F to 212°F). Most bacteria don't survive at these temperatures.

Items served cold should be kept cold and not be allowed to get warmer than 4°C (40°F). "Cooling and freezing only stop microorganisms from multiplying. Rarely are bacteria killed by the cold. Once the temperature warms up, they quickly recover and begin to grow and multiply," she explains.

If you have questions about food safety and handling, contact Tenold in Airdrie at (403)948-8504 or Linda St. Onge in Edmonton at (403)427-2412. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Cont'd on page 5

As well, Albertans can call the *Food Safety Information Line* toll-free at 1-800-892-8333 or in the Calgary area call 287-0098.

Contact: *Suzanne Tenold*
(403)948-8504

Agri-News briefs

Motivating farm employees seminar

Becoming an employer is a learning experience, but you don't have to learn by trial and error. *A Honest Day's Work – Motivating Farm Employees to Give Their Best* is a two-day seminar designed to help farm employers. The seminar runs Feb. 14 and Feb. 22 in Vermilion. Day one topics include assessing labor needs, recruiting, selecting and orienting employees. Day two delves further into employee management covering communication, motivation, discipline and available resources. Registration is required by Feb. 8. Space is limited and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is $35. For more information, contact Leona Reynolds Zayak in Vermilion at (403)853-8101, Sharon Stollery in St. Paul at (403)645-6301 or Margo Lawrence in Camrose at (403)679-1210. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Seeding for succession – succession planning seminars this month

Farm families concerned about the issues involved in managing the farm from one generation to the next have the opportunity to focus on those issues at two-day succession planning seminars. The seminars will be held in four locations – the Royal Inn in Edmonton Feb. 7 and 8, the Lethbridge Lodge in Lethbridge Feb. 13 and 14, the Medicine Hat Lodge in Medicine Hat on Feb. 14 and 15 and the Capri Centre in Red Deer on Feb. 19 and 20. Farm families can work through the legal, financial, tax and family dimensions of a complete succession plan. Registration is $199 for one person or $299 for a couple. The fee includes a seminar banquet, lunches, materials, refreshments and GST. For more information, contact Don Kelly at 1-800-463-8287 or in the Edmonton area call 425-5720.

March 1 registration deadline for composting conference

March 1 is the registration deadline for an update conference on composting. *Composting Makes Compost* runs March 20 through 23 at Olds College. Day one is a choice of two workshops, either basic composting or full cost analysis of centralized composting. Keynote speaker is Maarten van de Kamp, a University of Massachusetts professor, with 18-years experience with composting. He's a contributing author to the widely acclaimed **On-Farm Composting Handbook**. The final day of the conference includes demonstrations of mid to large scale composting equipment. There are a number of registration options – full package or one-day rates. For more information, contact Kelly MacKinnon at (403)556-4683, Kim Ayrton at (403)556-4745, Tom Clark at (403)556-4644 or e-mail kayrton@admin.oldscollege.ab.ca.

Saskatoon production workshop March 23

The Fruit Growers Society of Alberta's annual *Saskatoon Production Workshop* is scheduled for March 23 in Sherwood Park. The one-day workshop features keynote speaker Sandra Purdy, a Saskatchewan grower. Workshop sessions include establishing an orchard, importance of cooling, using pesticides safely, pruning, grassing in, harvesting and mulching. Registration is $30 for society members and $45 for non-members. Anyone interested in the workshop can contact Don Fossum in Sherwood Park at (403)467-6992 for an agenda and registration form.

4-H Leaders rocked with 4-H at conference

About 275 volunteer 4-H leaders got *rockin' with 4-H* at the annual *Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference* last month in Edmonton. They attended sessions designed to assist both experienced and new leaders learn more about 4-H club administration and working with youth. The conference is a great way for leaders to learn from each other. Besides Alberta 4-H leaders, delegates at the conference were from the other Western Canadian provinces and Montana. Members of the Alberta 4-H Council and 4-H Foundation of Alberta also attended the three-day conference. One highlight of the conference was the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame induction. The new inductees are Bill McGrath of Vermilion and Terry Crisp of Monitor. For more information about the conference, please contact Penny Wilkes at the home economics and 4-H branch in Edmonton at (403)422-4444. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Leading edge pea seminars start Feb. 13

Zone two pulse growers can chose to attend one of three update seminars. The three leading edge seminars feature the same line-up of topics – new varieties, weed control, new crop development in Alberta, re-thinking field pea fertility and innoculants. The first seminar of the series is Feb. 13 in Three Hills, the second is Feb. 14 in Drumheller and the third is Feb. 15 in Airdrie. Pre-registration is required to determine the number of lunches needed. Registration is $10. To register, call the corresponding Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office – in Three Hills, 443-8525, in Drumheller , 825-1675 or in Airdrie at 948-8551. All the seminars are sponsored by Zone 2 of the Alberta Pulse Growers' Commission, participating industry and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in **March 1996** or **later in 1996**? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates?

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). **Please include your telephone number**:

Please return this form by **Noon February 21, 1996** *to:*

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6
FAX (403)427-2861

(*Coming agricultural events* is published four times a year in **Agri-News**.
The next list will be **March 4, 1996.**
Coming events are also on Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's
Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/)

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AGRI-NEWS

February 12, 1996

CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

Internet among new FBMI training options

If hitting the paved highway to get to a course doesn't work for you, try the electronic highway.

"We're moving to more distance delivery and other training options in a new Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) pilot project," says FBMI provincial co-ordinator Anita Lunden.

The pilot project course teaches about futures and options contracts. By the end of the course, participants should be able to develop their own marketing strategies using futures and options. Participants can chose to learn from five different delivery methods including video conferencing, audio-graphics conferencing, printed course modules and courses on CD ROM and Internet.

While some of the projects have already started, participants can start anytime after March 1, but must complete the courses by March 31. "This is so we can evaluate how effective the delivery method was," says Lunden.

"There are a number of features and benefits in this project," she adds. "It's a chance to experience new methods at a reduced price – it's the same price as a two-day course – but you don't have to travel anywhere and you can work on the course when you want," she explains. "Because you set your own pace – the only requirement is to finish the course work by March 31 – you can repeat sections as often as you want or skip what you already know."

Educational institutions and private sector companies are involved in providing the courses. Olds College has printed modules with no need for special equipment and assistance is available by telephone. To register, call Olds College at (403)556-4617.

Mitcon Inc. has a CD Rom program that introduces futures and options. Participants need a computer with a CD Rom drive, a sound card that's sound blaster compatible, Windows and a color monitor. One hour of phone support is provided along with the interactive software. To register, call Paul Cassidy in Calgary at (403)226-0018.

KenAgra Management is combining with both the University of Alberta's extension faculty and Lakeland College in two different programs. An Internet course is offered through the university. Course participants need a computer, modem and Internet connection. The interactive question and answer approach includes case studies, and participants can ask an instructor questions via e-mail.

The two teleconferencing courses are available through Lakeland College. Level one futures and options, a videoconferencing course, started Feb. 5 and runs Monday evenings through March 18. The course is available in Vermilion, Lloydminster, Fairview and Peace River.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Internet among new FBMI training options 1

First time medicinal, aromatic plants conference in March 2

MAP through audio and video 2

Home study to better bookkeeping 3

Publication outlines CFC phase out strategies 4

UFA new exclusive sponsor of 4-H key leader program 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

The level two course, advanced use of options, is delivered by audio-graphics teleconferencing. It started in late January and runs through Feb. 22 on Thursday evenings. It's available in Vermilion, Lloydminster, Vegreville, St. Paul, Fort Kent, High Prairie, McLennon and one Saskatchewan location, Maidstone.

"The basic rate for all these courses is $125, plus long distance and Internet charges where applicable," notes Lunden.

For more information about taking an alternative delivery marketing course, contact Lunden at (403)556-4278 or Gary Spurrell at (403)556-4236. Both are based at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm business management branch in Olds. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Anita Lunden (403)556-4278
Gary Spurrell (403)556-4236

First time medicinal, aromatic plants conference in March

For the first time on the Prairies, researchers and growers will meet next month to share what they know about medicinal and aromatic plants.

The *Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference* starts on March 3 and runs through March 5 at Olds College. Speakers are from across Canada and represent current growers, processors and researchers.

"There are many reasons for the conference," says Betty Vladicka, horticultural marketing officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"One is just to bring together the group of people currently involved in this sector. Hopefully we can get a better idea of the size of the sector, its scope on the Prairies and examine its potential," she adds.

Current North American development and trends in production and processing medicinal and aromatic plants are highlighted in the conference opening session. An overview will be provided by Terry Willard of Calgary, a practising herbalist with his own line of herbal supplements. He'll be followed by more specific looks at developments in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C.

Each half day session will focus on a specific subject with speakers addressing one aspect of the overall topic. The session subject areas are sustainable cultivation and harvesting, food and non-food uses, and future directions in production and utilization.

"Our final session is a panel discussion of whether there's a future for the medicinal and aromatic plant industry on the Prairies," says Vladicka.

Among the featured speakers are: Larry Wang, the University of Alberta professor who invented the Cold Buster bar and has researched the pharmaceutical effects of ginseng; Rick Kulow, a Saskatoon businessman who has been developing worldwide markets for borage products; Dennis Awang, an Ottawa-based consultant with extensive experience with natural products from herbs; and, Robin Marles, a Brandon University botany professor involved in developing new medicines from native plants and traditional herbal remedies.

Full registration is $125 plus GST before February 22. There are also daily and student rates. For more registration information, contact Lori Fuchs at Olds College at (403)556-8321.

For more information about the conference, contact Vladicka or Stan Blade in Edmonton at (403)422-1789 or fax (403)422-6096. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Betty Vladicka (403)422-1789
Stan Blade (403)422-1789

MAP through audio and video

More than 300 people braved the chill to catch the *1996 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP)* experts first-hand, but don't despair if the blistering cold kept you from the annual leading edge conference – you can catch their messages on audio and video tape.

"Our three plenary speaker sessions were video taped, and audio cassette tapes of all the other speakers are also available," notes Doug Barlund, chair of MAP'96.

Agricultural futurist Lowell Catlett was the opening keynote speaker. The agricultural economics and business professor energized the conference audience with his messages about rapid technological change and creative opportunities in the agriculture and food industry.

Larry Martin, director of economic research at the George Morris Centre and chair of the Agri-Food Competitive Council, was the second keynote speaker. He discussed Canada's ability to compete in the global agrifood economy and analyzed strengths such as quality, location, human resources and value-added commodities.

Psychologist Pat Pitsel wrapped up the conference by encouraging participants to use "the wisdom we've never lost." She told conference delegates to reach back to positive memories and reexamine motivation to move beyond current troubles.

"Their presentations were very highly rated by conference participants," says Barlund. The video tapes are $20 each and call be ordered by calling the MAP hotline at 1-800-367-6030.

Cont'd on page 3

"Conference participants also gave two thumbs up to Bob Church, a newcomer to MAP, and Gordon Colledge, who has been a conference favorite since his first appearance," adds Barlund. Church discussed how producers can position themselves for profit. Colledge's message was how to keep your cool in hot times.

The MAP'96 line-up focused on the theme of mastering your markets. Sessions included livestock, special crop, grain, short-term economic and long-term economic outlooks. Along the same theme were presentations on gathering market intelligence, how to find and get market information, products with pizzazz and presence, the WGTA, positioning yourself for profit, the changing world of trade and adventures in (diversified) ventures.

Audio tapes for all the session speakers are $10. They can also be ordered through the toll-free MAP hotline. Please add $3 shipping to your order. Cheques can be made payable to AFSC MAP'96 and mailed to MAP Tapes, Provincial Building, Box 160, Coronation, AB T0C 1C0. Tapes are only available until March 31, 1996.

While detailed evaluations aren't yet complete, Barlund says the overall impression of participants and conference organizers was extremely positive. "One of our innovations – the nerve centre – was a big hit," he notes. "It provided participants with an office away from home. They could get daily market reports through DTN and the Pool Commodity Trading Service, connect with FBMInet and Internet, make telephone calls, exchange business cards or receive messages."

The '96 conference followed up on a 1995 success by repeating the Alberta Food Products Fair. "It was a terrific hit again with a delectable variety of international flavors prepared by Alberta food processors and served by Capri Centre staff," says Barlund.

The 18th annual conference was held in Red Deer Jan. 30 through Feb. 1. It's a project of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC).

"We're also indebted to all the agencies and companies that support the conference, in particular to our 1996 major corporate sponsors, Agrium Inc, Alberta Pool and UFA," says Barlund.

Contact: *Doug Barlund*
(403)556-4245

Home study to better bookkeeping

A good set of financial records for your farm business provides a solid base for both decision making and financial analysis says an Alberta Agriculture family business specialist.

"Good records can also help you fill out your GST reports, make year end adjustments and assist with tax planning," says Diane Luke.

Setting up good records can be a challenge. One way to confront that challenge is the recently published **Keys to Farm Bookkeeping** home study course

"The course is designed to help farm managers set up or refine a system to keeping financial records that are easy to use and meaningful when you're analyzing your farm business," says Luke.

Whether a beginning farmer or experienced, the course can help. "Beginning farmers need to develop the habit of good bookkeeping early on so they'll be well prepared throughout their farming career. More experienced farmers may be considering expansion or diversification opportunities. Effective records will help them make sound decisions," she adds.

The Keys to Farm Bookkeeping is divided into eight modules, or parts. Paper handling and choosing a banking system are two of the basic modules at the course's start. The modules also reviews basic accounting concepts and how they apply to a farm business. The final modules introduce using records to make business decisions.

"As well, you'll learn about year-end adjustments that are necessary to give you a clear picture of your financial situation," she notes.

To help farm managers apply the course information, there are self-tests with an answer key at the end of each module. These case studies provide an opportunity to go through two months of a mock family's records.

"Take the time to complete the case study," encourages Luke. "It's a great way to practice and develop your bookkeeping skills."

There are other advantages. The course also lets you work with your own records as you study. As with other Alberta Agriculture home study courses, participants can work at their own pace at home.

"Another positive is if you plan to computerize your bookkeeping, this course gives you basic knowledge to understand the double entry system," she adds.

The course is $45 plus GST. To order, write the Home Study Program at 201, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 and make cheques payable to the Provincial Treasurer. Or order using your credit card (VISA and Mastercard), by calling (403)427-2171.

Cont'd on page 4

Application forms for this and all other home study programs are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or by calling the home study program at (403)427-2171. More than 20 courses in financial and business planning, livestock production and crop production are available. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Diane Luke
(403)823-1676

Publication outlines CFC phase-out strategies

Agriculture and food processors who have to deal with phasing out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) can learn about their options from a new publication.

CFCs are used primarily in refrigeration systems; systems that are widely used in agriculture and food processing industries. For example, many dairy farmers, food processors and food distributors use CFC refrigeration to cool, freeze, store and transport food products.

However, CFCs are also a major factor in ozone depletion. In fact, they are recognized as the most widely used substance responsible for breaking down the critical ozone layer which, in turn, contributes to global warming.

Governments around the world, including Canada, have responded to ozone depletion concerns with legislation to limit and ultimately eliminate CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals.

"These changes will affect many operators in Alberta's agriculture and food processing sector because they'll have to phase out these CFC refrigerants," says Dave Ritchie, a development officer with the Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CASEA) processing based program.

"The publication is one way to help processors during the transition," he adds.

Phasing out Chlorofluorobocarbon (CFC) Refrigerants – Developing a Management Strategy was prepared by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's engineering services branch. It describes CFCs and related refrigerants, ozone depletion, new legislation, and options and strategies for dealing with the changes.

Copies of the booklet are available by contacting Ritchie in Edmonton at (403)427-7325. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Dave Ritchie
(403)427-7325

UFA new exclusive sponsor of 4-H key leader program

The Alberta 4-H program is pleased to welcome the newest addition to its family of major sponsors.

The United Farmers' of Alberta (UFA) is the new exclusive sponsor of the 4-H key leader program. Key leaders are experienced 4-H volunteers who've been trained to help 4-H leaders with club operations.

UFA has been a long-time 4-H supporter on the local level notes Penny Wilkes, leadership development specialist with Alberta Agriculture's home economics and 4-H branch. More recently that support has extended to provincial programs such as the beef heifer show, judging seminars, the annual leaders' conference, the new horse classic event, and now the key leader program.

"UFA is happy to continue sponsorship to 4-H," says John Lee, UFA member relations co-ordinator. "We look forward to a great 1996 4-H year, and UFA is indeed proud of Alberta 4-H and its members."

"The new support from UFA along with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development resources will ensure that help for all 4-H clubs is as close as a telephone call," says Wilkes.

Key leaders are trained and eager to help leaders with all aspects of running a 4-H club. "Key leaders are there to answer questions, not to run clubs," she notes. Because all the key leaders have 4-H experience, they're a wealth of information on topics such as leader registration, ordering supplies, planning club events, developing constitutions and handling sticky situations that might arise.

"Corporate sponsors like UFA allow us to maintain Alberta 4-H as one of the premier youth programs in Canada. On behalf of members, leaders and key leaders involved in Alberta 4-H, thank you UFA," she adds.

Contact: Penny Wilkes
(403)422-4444

Agri-News briefs

Minister proclaims World Vision 30-Hour Famine Week in Alberta

For the second consecutive year, Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's minister, is encouraging young Albertans to take part in *World Vision's 30-Hour Famine Week*. The national dates are February 23 and 24, however the awareness famine can take place any time during the year. Young Canadians go without food – although drink lots of fluids – for 30 hours and raise money from sponsors for their commitment. Last year over $1.8 million was raised to provide food, shelter and medicine for children around the world. One of the projects it supports is agpacks in Mozambique. These packages provide seeds and tools to farmers. "I am sure that getting young people to participate in an event that asks them to refrain from eating for 30 hours will certainly make them aware of the hunger that others suffer. The feel of hunger is something few Canadians are familiar with," says Paszkowski. For more information, contact national director Carol Froom at 1-800-387-8080.

Dates change for Zone 2 Leading edge pea seminars

Dates for two *Leading Edge Pea Seminars* have been changed. The first seminar in the series will still be in Three Hills on Feb. 13, however the Drumheller and Airdrie dates have changed. The Airdrie seminar is now first, on Feb. 14 at the provincial Agriculture Centre. The Drumheller seminar is the next day, Feb. 15, at the Stampede Barn. The seminars all feature the same line-up of topics – new varieties, weed control, new crop development in Alberta, re-thinking field pea fertility and inoculants. Pre-registration is required to determine the number of lunches needed. Registration is $10. To register, call the corresponding Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office: Three Hills at 443-8525, Drumheller at 825-1675 or Airdrie at 948-8551. All the seminars are sponsored by Zone 2 of the Alberta Pulse Growers' Commission, participating industry and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Emu seminar Feb. 24

The Alberta Emu Association is holding an educational seminar Feb. 24 in Red Deer. The day-long session runs at the Red Deer Lodge. For registration and more information about the session, contact K. Hermary at (403)784-3379 in Clive or L. Richard at (403)963-4523 in Stony Plain.

Working your cows for profit seminars

Cow/calf producers concerned by lower cattle prices and cost of production can get some fine-tuning ideas from a one-day seminar held twice this week. *Working your cows for profit* runs Feb. 15 at the Claresholm Community Centre and Feb. 16 at the Medicine Hat Stampede grounds. Speakers include Jim Leachman of Montana and Harlin Richie of Michigan. Leachman will discuss the economics of crossbreeding. Richie, a regular contributor to **The Cattleman**, will talk about the optimum cow. Seminars run from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is $20 per person and required before Feb. 12. To register, call any of these Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices: Strathmore at (403)934-3355, High River at (403)652-8300, Claresholm at (403)625-1445, Cardston at (403)653-5230 or Medicine Hat at (403)529-3616. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

45th annual poultry industry conference March 4-6

The challenge of change is the theme of the 45th annual *Poultry Industry Conference* in Red Deer March 4 through 6. Four poultry organizations hold meetings as well as hear from industry guest speakers. Those organizations are the Alberta Hatching Egg Marketing Board, the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, the Alberta Egg Producers and the Alberta Chicken Producers. For more information, contact Martin Zuidhof in Edmonton at (403)427-4608.

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Doing business on the farm seminars

Farmers, ranchers and people who do business with them can learn, see, hear and touch the future technology of agriculture February 29 and March 1 in Camrose. *Doing business on the farm* has three elements. On the first day, "making it pay" aims at helping farm managers use and profitably manage technology. "Tomorrow's customer" is for agricultural consultants and educators. The next day is devoted to "smart systems" and features technology, products and services in exhibits and workshops. At the "test drive centre", participants can try new software. The smart systems trade fair is $3. Making it pay is $50 and tomorrow's customer session, $250. For more information, contact George Rock in Leduc at (403)986-8985.

New president, new pulse commission zone

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APGC) not only selected a new president at its recent annual meeting, it also added another zone to its organization. Doug Halberg is the new commission president. "It's an exciting time for the pulse industry and the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission," he says. "We've seen huge growth in the pulse acreage in Alberta; so much so that APGC has responded by creating a new zone to better represent producers in the eastern part of Alberta." Zone 5 covers northeastern Alberta. Gordon Tuck is the zone president. For more information, contact APGC general manager Janette McDonald Adam in Leduc at (403)986-9398.

Commercial horticultural courses at Devonian Botanical Gardens

The University of Alberta's Devonian Botanical Gardens is offering a variety of commercial horticultural courses in the next months. On Feb. 17, there's woody ornamentals for tree farms and shelterbelts. Operating a small-scale greenhouse is the topic of a one-day course on Feb. 24. The March line-up includes native plants nursery on March 2, landscape property maintenance on March 9 and dried flowers on March 16. April courses are woodlot management on April 12 and pond raising rainbow trout on April 13. The centre also offers a wide range of other horticultural and craft courses. Devonian Botanical Gardens is located 5 km north of Devon, approximately a 15-minute drive from Edmonton's southwestern city limits. For more information, contact education co-ordinator Gordon Neilson at (403)987-2064.

Regional pork seminars in early March

Research results that can make you money is the theme of a series of four day-long regional pork seminars running between March 4 and 7. The series starts in Lethbridge on March 4, continues in Red Deer on March 5, moves to St. Vincent on March 6 and concludes in Barrhead on March 7. Topics include TGE case studies and financial risk implications; updates on the Pork Quality Assurance Program and Alberta Pork Research Centre; and, particle size study, pulse feeding, SEW and phosphorus trial results. Registration is $25 per person and includes lunch. For more information, contact pork specialists Marvin Salomons in Red Deer at (403)340-5336, Irene Wegner in Vermilion at (403)853-8128, Bert Dening in Barrhead at (403)674-8247 or Art Lange in Edmonton at (403)427-5096. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

AGRI-NEWS
February 19, 1996

CANADIANA
JAN 22 1997

Nutrition to go during awareness month

Nutrition to go will be front and centre through the province – and the nation – during March.

"National Nutrition Month is putting the emphasis on how to make healthy food choices wherever you go," says Suzanne Tenold, regional foods and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Canadian consumers are buying more hassle-free, prepare at home meals, eating out more often, eating more frequently on-the-run and buying more prepared, take-home foods.

"The theme recognizes that today's busy lifestyle, as seen in those trends, has brought changes to traditional meal planning and eating schedules. People want guidelines about how to make healthy, nutritious food choices wherever and whenever they eat," she adds.

Consumers are concerned about nutrition notes Tenold. In the **1995 Grocery Attitudes of Canadian's**, survey grocery shoppers rated the importance of nutrition at its highest point in the survey's history.

"However, Canadians are still confused about what foods can be included in a balanced diet," says Tenold. "Fortunately, eating well and staying on a healthy food track may not be as a difficult as you might think, and that's what nutrition month is all about."

"We're trying to dispel the misbelief that to eat well you must do extensive planning, shop at special stores and avoid certain kinds of foodservice establishments," says Corilee Watters, a member of the Alberta Registered Dietitians Association (ARDA).

Overall, consumers should keep in mind the healthy eating philosophy of eating a variety of foods, serving sizes to meet your activity needs, selecting foods from all four food groups and limiting fat intake.

For more information about Nutrition Month and healthy eating, contact Tenold in Airdrie at (403)948-8504 or e-mail tenold@agric.gov.ab.ca, or Linda St. Onge in Edmonton at (403)427-2412. Or, contact a dietitian through your local public health services department or regional healthy authority, or by looking under dietitians in the *Yellow Pages*.

Nutrition To Go!

Contact: *Suzanne Tenold*
(403)948-8504

This Week

Nutrition to go during awareness month 1
Cooking with nutrition to go 2
Sheep code of practice eighth developed 2
Panicked tone in cattle markets 3
Grain storage can be a marketing strategy 3
January '96 coldest since 1982 3
Ag products marketing council reviewing regulations 4
Final report released on Northern Alberta research priorities 4
Human, vet potential explored at medicinal plant conference 5
Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Cooking with nutrition to go

The best of healthy eating intentions can be sabotaged by time limits. But, there are solutions says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development foods and nutrition specialist.

"Statistics just back up what many of us suspect and know to be true," says Suzanne Tenold. "Deciding what to cook, how to save time, and speed and ease of preparation are factors in what people eat."

For example, in a 1992 study for the Beef Information Centre 69 per cent of survey respondents said deciding what to cook was the worst part of meal preparation. Nearly half, 48 per cent, said they were always trying to save time and 45 per cent admitted speed and ease of preparation were among the most important considerations when they decided what groceries to buy.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada suggests that consumers are buying more hassle-free, prepare-at-home meals, eating out more often, eating more frequently on-the-run and buying more prepared, take-home foods.

"Fortunately nutrition doesn't have to suffer when you're making those sorts of decisions in the grocery store aisle," says Tenold. "Many products today provide shortcuts to nutritious meals."

The trend has been labelled *speed scratch cooking*, a way to eat healthy without needing a lot of preparation time. "It's using shortcuts such as prepackaged, convenience products and personalizing the meal by adding fresh ingredients. You can combine ease and speed with nutrition," says Tenold.

"The food industry has been quick to include preparation ideas that support this trend on their packages," she adds.

If they're short of time, people should also consider breaking away from the three meal a day habit. For example, eating while walking to the car or bus, sitting at your desk or waiting between appointments. "Healthy snacks throughout the day provide you with energy. It's a better choice than waiting until the last minute when you're too tired or hungry to make a healthy choice," she says.

During March, the concept of *nutrition to go* will be promoted by a variety of people and organizations during National Nutrition Month. The national awareness month is co-ordinated by the Canadian Dietetic Association along with provincial groups such as the Alberta Registered Dietitians Association (ARDA).

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
(403)948-8504

Sheep code of practice eighth developed

A recommended code of practice for sheep management is the eighth nationally developed set of livestock care and handling guidelines.

"The sheep code covers 16 specific areas from birth to processing," says Ray Fenton, animal health and welfare specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

More specifically, the code provides guidelines for shelter and housing, feed and water, reproductive management, identification, surgical procedures, shearing, handling and transportation, and marketing and processing.

Fenton was one of three Alberta representatives who contributed to and reviewed the code. The Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC) currently oversees code development, updates and reviews. The process is done in co-operation with the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies as well as a number of agricultural organizations, and federal and provincial agriculture departments.

Like the other seven codes, the sheep code of practice is voluntary. "All the codes are intended to be an educational tool for producers, industry personnel, scientists, educators and welfare groups to use to promote sound husbandry and animal welfare practices," says Fenton.

"For producers, it's a guideline they can use to compare or to improve their own practices," he adds.

The code isn't a production manual. However, its recommendations apply to sheep cared for in all types of management systems including commercial, research, educational, hobby and other farm operations.

The **Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep** is available free of charge to Alberta sheep producers and other Alberta sheep sector stakeholders from the the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission office in Calgary at (403)735-5111 and the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care in Calgary at (403)777-0445.

Voluntary codes of practice are also available for poultry, pigs, veal calves, dairy and beef cattle, and ranched mink and fox. Those codes are available from the respective provincial livestock organizations.

For information about how codes of practice are developed, write the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC) at 171 Slater Street, Room 701, Vanguard Building, Ottawa, ON K1P 5H7.

Contact: Ray Fenton
(403)422-4844

Panicked tone in cattle markets

Panic is the term that best describes the mood in Alberta feeder cattle markets during January says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"In some cases feeder cattle prices in mid-January were a full $10/cwt. below late December prices," notes Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch.

Breeding stock prices dropped in tandem with the feeder cattle markets. Bred cow prices ranged from meat value of below $500 to a top end of only $750. "There were a few reports of lack of feed leading to forced sales of good quality cows into what is clearly now a 'buyers' market' for all types of breeding stock," he says.

"The large downwards adjustment to feeder cattle prices to start off the new year will put many cow-calf and backgrounders in a cash flow squeeze," he adds. "Feeding expensive grain and hay to calves through a long cold winter, only to sell them for 15 to 20 cents less per pound than they would have received in the fall has been a frustrating experience for many producers."

In fed cattle markets, instead of the typical first quarter rally, markets slid lower during January. In the U.S. market, prices reached $65/cwt. in mid-January, only to retreat to $63 the following week.

Canadian fed cattle prices dropped in tandem with their U.S. counterparts. In fact, the dip was slightly lower in Alberta, as the Alberta-U.S. price spread widened during the month. "This widening is opposite to the typical seasonal trend for this time of year, and indicates poor local demand for fed cattle," says Gietz.

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

Grain storage can be a marketing strategy

Long-term grain storage can be profitable, but it pays to watch the market outlook and not let greed lead you into disappointment says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development marketing specialist.

"You need to pay attention to your profit level and cash flow needs, and sell into a rising market. If you let greed rule your decision and wait for the top of market, you could end up disappointed and having to sell into a falling market," says the Vermilion-based Neil Blue.

Deciding how long to store grain on the farm depends upon a number of factors explains Blue. Changes in futures prices, basis levels, delivery opportunities, commercial storage changes and interest rates all play a role.

Long-term storage is profitable if prices rise enough to cover storage and interest costs. This farm-gate price rise could result from higher commodities futures prices or a narrowing basis or a combination of the two.

Unless a farmer is paying for commercial storage, the storage cost is limited to the investment cost and depreciation on the farmer's own bins. This physical storage cost ranges up to about ten cents per bushel per year, depending on the facilities.

"A more significant cost is what each farmer pays in interest," says Blue. For example, for a farmer with outstanding trade account debt accruing interest at two per cent per month, the interest cost of storing $8 per bushel canola in the bin is 16 cents per month or a dollar per bushel for six months.

"In other words, this farmer needs over $9 per bushel six months after harvest just to justify the interest cost," he says. "On the other hand, another farmer with no debt may only need 25 cents a bushel higher price to cover the interest costs of storing his $8 per bushel canola for the six months.

"Both farmers, however, are also exposed to the risks of spoilage and theft as they store their grain," he adds.

In years where there are abundant supplies, storage may pay. In this case, harvest bids are relatively low and grain buyers have no difficulty attracting product, so don't bid aggressively. The basis, or discount below the futures price, is relatively wide. A marketing option is to store the grain until buyer bids become more competitive.

On the other hand, when supplies are relatively tight, the narrowest basis and highest prices may occur between late fall and mid-winter, before all the details about the harvested crop are available. In this situation, unpriced storage might not be the best alternative.

"You can make this situation work for you," says Blue. "This year a farmer sold feed barley in November when the basis was relatively narrow. He took a small amount from selling his grain and bought U.S. corn call options to take advantage of a possible upside in the feedgrain markets. Cashing in these options now will have added 35 cents per bushel to his barley price. The most the farmer could have lost was the option cost of 12 cents per bushel. Meanwhile, the local barley price has actually dropped."

Contact: Neil Blue
(403)853-8101

January '96 coldest since 1982

This year began with the coldest January in more than a dozen years says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's weather resource specialist.

"It was the coldest January since 1982 with an average temperature 6.7 degrees below normal and total precipitation

Cont'd on page 4

77 per cent of normal," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch. "January is usually the coldest month of the year," he notes.

The average monthly temperature for January was -20.3°C, which is 6.7 degrees below the long term average of -13.6°C. Most Alberta locations reported temperatures between five and nine degrees below normal. These averages, and those for precipitation, are based on data recorded at 29 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Peace River reported the greatest monthly temperature variation, some 9.4 degrees cooler than normal. The normal temperature for January is -17.6°C.

High Level reported -29.8°C, the coldest monthly temperature of all the stations. That was 8.3 degrees cooler than its monthly normal temperature of -21.5°C.

"January did start with near normal temperatures, but then cooled off. In fact, warm Pacific air dominated the weather between January 8 to 11, with several record maximum temperatures set," says Dzikowski.

"Then an arctic cold front invaded from the north on January 12. Temperatures dropped between 25 and 50 degrees in two days. Temperatures remained very cold the rest of the month," he adds.

Precipitation was also below normal during January, some 5.3 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 23.4 mm. January is usually the sixth driest month of the year.

The most precipitation was the in the central region. Amounts of between 16 to 62 mm, or 100 to 250 per cent of normal, were recorded. Most other locations reported below normal precipitation totals, although amounts varied from 5 to 30 mm, or 20 to 120 per cent of normal.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Ag products marketing council reviewing regulations

Seven regulations related to the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act are scheduled for review and three for repeal in 1996.

"The first three we'll look at are related to the way producer marketing boards operate," says Brian Rhiness, general manager of the Agricultural Products Marketing Council.

Regulations relating to two recent producer plebiscites – the Alberta Cattle Commission and the Alberta Pork Producer Development Corporation (APPDC) – will be repealed.

"Boards and commissions whose regulations are scheduled for review this year are already working on updating," he adds. This includes the Alberta Chicken Producers', the Alberta Hatching Egg Board, Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board and the APPDC.

"Some of the organizations scheduled for 1997 have already begun preliminary work," says Rhiness. Reviews in 1997 will include the Alberta Egg Producers, the Potato Growers of Alberta, the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Marketing Board and the Alberta Vegetable Growers' Marketing Board.

The more recently organized commissions – barley, canola, pulse, soft wheat and winter wheat – are scheduled for review in 1998.

"Please watch for the dates of industry review meetings in your commodity newsletter, farm publications and other news sources," says Rhiness.

The review is part of a government wide regulatory reform plan announced in April 1995. Overseeing the review is a task force with the mandate to review every government regulation with a view to keep only those necessary to ensure protection of the public interest. MLA Gary Friedel is head of the task force.

"Anyone in the agricultural community with an interest or concern about the review, or who would like to provide input to one of the reviews, can contact the council's office for more information about the process," notes Rhiness. The council's address is #305, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Or, call (403)427-2164 or fax (403)422-9690. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Brian Rhiness (403)427-2164
Diane Aves (403)427-2164

Final report released on Northern Alberta research priorities

Research aimed at reducing production costs and improving the competitiveness of the Peace region's established agricultural commodities is among 16 recommendations made by a joint public-private steering committee set up to help northern Alberta, especially the Peace region, seize emerging opportunities in domestic and international markets.

That research would include developing new disease-resistant, early maturing and higher-yielding varieties of cereals and oilseeds.

A 16-member steering committee oversaw the study and was assisted by Serecon Management Consulting Inc. of Edmonton.

The study, which included public consultations, came after Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, asked the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute

Cont'd on page 5

(AARI) to examine the marketplace opportunities and research priorities in the Peace River region.

"Agriculture has always been an integral part of northern Alberta's economy. The Peace region is blessed with ideal growing conditions and climate which create favourable circumstances for a variety of agricultural commodities and products," says Paszkowski. "Even with this rich diversity, the application of identified research and technology transfer will empower the region to further develop and prosper."

The study also identified a need to enhance expanding and emerging markets through developing new products and new uses for existing products. An associated need is research into further value-added processing of agricultural products.

Another recommendation suggests the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Station at Beaverlodge maintain or enhance its capabilities in areas such as canola disease resistance and management, field crop agronomy, forage cultivar development, and soil and water research.

The roles of the provincial department and the private sector in expanding research in the region are also identified. As well, it's recommended Alberta and British Columbia co-operate to meet research requirements.

A strategy will be developed for following up on the study's recommendations.

"I commend the Agricultural Research Institute, the steering committee, Serecon Management Consulting Inc., department staff and all who participated in public consultations. Your input will help shape the future of the agriculture industry in the Peace region," says Paszkowski.

Copies of the Northern Alberta Research Priorities study are available from the department's research division by calling (403)427-1956.

Contact: Ron Glen (403)427-2137
Dr. Ralph Christian (403)422-1072

Human, vet potential explored at medicinal plant conference

The potential to use medicinal and aromatic plants on humans and animals is among the variety of topics at the first-ever *Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference*.

Researchers, growers and business people involved and interested in this sector will meet to share what they know about medicinal and aromatic plants starting March 3 in Olds. The conference runs March 3 through 5 at Olds College.

"Speakers will discuss borage to mint, and from ginseng to native plants," says Betty Vladicka, horticultural marketing officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"They'll discuss how to grow these plants, processing opportunities and research about their uses," she adds. "As well, there'll be an overall perspective of production and processing trends in North America, and more specifically in Canada's four western provinces."

The conference is broken into four main sessions and a wrap-up panel discussion. Each session is broken down into specific topics within that area. The main sessions include current developments and trends, sustainable cultivation and harvesting, food and non-food uses, and future directions in production and utilization.

A panel will discuss whether there's a future for the medicinal and aromatic plant industry on the Prairies. Panelists include growers, a restaurant user, processors and a financial officer.

Several Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialists will share their knowledge during the conference. Refe Gaudiel, special crop researcher at the Crop Diversification Centre South, will examine special crop production trends in his presentation, "Mints and more". Greenhouse specialist Mohyuddin Mirza, of the Crop Diversification Centre North, will discuss the opportunities for diversification in greenhouse production of medicinal plants.

Full conference registration is $133.75 before February 22. There are also daily and student rates. For more registration information, contact Lori Fuchs at Olds College at (403)556-8321.

For more information about the conference, contact Vladicka or Stan Blade in Edmonton at (403)422-1789 or fax (403)422-6096. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Betty Vladicka (403)422-1789
Stan Blade (403)422-1789

Agri-News briefs

Spring may bring better lentil bids

As export business slowed to a snail's pace in January, prices for top grade lentils continue to show weakness says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Prices will likely drift from now until new spring business surfaces with the reopening of the St. Lawrence," says Matthew Machielse of the market analysis and statistics branch. He advises producers to hold unsold quality products until markets react to expected springtime business and, "hopefully," he adds, "better bid levels." For more information about lentils and other special crop markets contact Machielse in Edmonton at (403)427-4011. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Feedgrain prices still attractive

Recent price declines have clouded the simple fact that feedgrain prices are still very attractive says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "While I expect this market could see price recovery later in the season as seeding and related weather issues become more relevant, it may be advisable not to risk everything and hold on to what you have in storage just because prices are ten dollars per tonne off their highs," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch. "This is probably the year to keep a small portion of your crop for speculative purposes in the event of crop problems somewhere in the world in 1996-97," he adds. Or, alternatively, purchase calls as a speculative tool to take advantage of price increases during the spring or summer. Problems in any major producing or consuming nation will get prices soaring he notes. "Until new crop is assured, old crop material will retain much of its price strength." he adds. For more information about feedgrain, wheat or oilseed markets, contact Dooley in Edmonton at (403)427-5387. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Ostrich breeders meet March 8-10

The Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association is holding its annual meeting and spring conference March 8 through 10. The dual event will be held at the Capri Centre in Red Deer. For more information, contact Darrell Kavich in Vegreville at (403)632-7399 or Darcee Robertson in Crossfield at (403)946-4037.

Lots of pork in '96

There will be no shortage of pork in the coming year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Most of the increase in production, however, won't be seen until the second half of the year," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch. He predicts production will likely hold below or close to year-ago levels in the next few months. "Prices will likely trend above 1995 levels until the summer, given a steady Canada/U.S. exchange rate," he notes. He forecasts Index-100 Alberta hogs to average $1.40/kg (dressed) through March and April and up to $1.50 in May and $1.60 in June, before dropping off. For more information about livestock markets, contact Gietz in Edmonton at (403)427-5376. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Lamb alone in livestock price good news

Alberta lamb producers are faring better than other traditional livestock producers as prices continue to be good says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Persistent production declines in the U.S., high commercial breeding stock prices, favorable feeder prices (in spite of rising feed costs), strong demand and tight supplies in the North American marketplace should sustain prices at the $90 to $95/cwt. level in the near-term," says Don Hansen of the market analysis and statistics branch. Through the first month of 1996, U.S. lamb prices kept pace with last year's buoyant prices. In Texas, slaughter lambs are traded near the $72/cwt. (US) mark, some $6/cwt. higher than January 1995. On the U.S. East Coast, wholesale lamb carcasses were trading at $160/cwt. in early January, unchanged from December 1995. This is $18/cwt. above January 1995 prices. Bitterly cold weather brought only light volumes to Edmonton's mid-month sale. However, they averaged $95.50/cwt. In the feeder lamb class (61 to 80 lbs.) prices were unchanged from December at $110/cwt. For more information about the lamb market, contact Hansen in Edmonton at (403)427-4011. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

March 1 advance registration for basic pruning

Advance registration is the only way to be a part of one of two basic pruning courses. Participants can choose between March 5 and 6 or March 7 and 8 for the Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association (LANTA) workshops. The registration deadline is March 1 and payment or purchase order must accompany the registration form. The $60 course fee includes workbook, a certificate and coffee breaks. Oarticipants will learn techniques using pruning tools. Workshop topics include plant structures, tree and shrub insects and diseases, plant hardiness and pruning trees including shrubs and fruit trees. The workshop will be held at the Crop Diversification Centre (CDC) North in Edmonton. For more information or a registration form, call LANTA at (403)489-1991 or fax (403)444-2152.

Revised date for interaction FBMI video conferencing

An interactive environment that's the next best thing to being there is the format for an experiment in alternative course delivery methods. The pilot Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) marketing course will start March 1 at five locations and run for four consecutive Mondays. Participating sites are Vermilion, Lloydminster, Fairview, Peace River and Medicine Hat. The course runs between 6:45 p.m. and 9 p.m. Course participants will talk face-to-face using television monitors, video camera and compressed video technology that allows the video signals to be sent over telephone lines. The instructor and classmates at the different locations will be able to hear and see each other as well as the presentation material that's part of the session. Registration is $125. To register, call KenAgra at 1-800-465-2936 or Lakeland College in Vermilion at (403)853-8444. For more information about the alternate delivery marketing courses, contact Anita Lunden in Olds at (403)556-4278.

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AGRI-NEWS

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Take the challenge during National Farm Safety Week

There's a challenge in the air for farm parents and children to become farm safety super sleuths.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Safety Council and the federal agriculture department, provincial agencies and corporate sponsors issued the challenge as part of *National Farm Safety Week* from March 7 through 13.

"Our hope is for rural children to grow up safely, and continue to use their safety knowledge throughout their lives," says Eric Jones, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development farm safety consultant.

National statistics show most farm injuries, over 70 per cent, occur while children are playing and just under 20 per cent while they are doing chores. Not surprisingly, the most dangerous days of the week are Saturday and Sunday when school-aged children are at home. About 45 per cent of child injuries occur on the weekend.

"This is a good time to think about the hazards around your farm and how you can prevent accidents from happening," adds Jones. "The national awareness week brochure has a safety check list you might want to compare with your farm."

That check list includes items such as a fenced play area for small children; locked and secure locations for pesticides, treated seed and veterinary supplies; and, enforcing the rule of "no seat, no rider".

"If you come up with an innovation while you're solving a safety problem, you can submit it to a new national contest," notes Jones. An example of a safety innovation is adapting farm machinery. The contest closes on June 20. Entries can be submitted to the CFA at Suite 101, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E7.

For more information about the farm safety program in Alberta, call Jones or Jacqueline Galloway in Edmonton at (403)427-2171. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact:	*Eric Jones*	*Jacqueline Galloway*
	(403)427-2171	*(403)427-2171*

Free video previews for Agriculture Week

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's video library system is holding its second annual free video preview week.

"This year, it's in conjunction with the provincial *Agriculture Week* activities," says Ken Blackley, multi-media branch information officer. "Between March 4 and 8, you can go into your local district office and view our new releases as well as any other titles free of charge.

"The preview week is one way to showcase the wide range of information available in an entertaining and easy-to-absorb format," he adds.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Take the Challenge During National Farm Safety Week 1

Free video previews for Agriculture Week 1

Variety selection, seeding calculations all on Internet 2

Seven areas added to drought deferral list 2

What to do with WGTPP installment 3

First provincial ginseng annual meeting 3

Saskatoon production workshop for beginners plus 4

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Among the recently released department-produced videos are **Biotechnology: A Quick Dip in the Gene Pool**; **Woodlot Management**; an updated version of **Outstanding in Your Field**; **Diagnosing Crop Problems**; and, the latest episode in the *World Trading Game* series.

"New titles cover topics ranging from promoting Alberta's agricultural advantage to how to choose a new ground opener," he notes.

As part of the special preview week, everyone who comes in to watch the new offerings can enter their name in a draw to receive a one-year video membership. A membership can be won at each of the 53 district offices.

Video library memberships are $12 for an individual and $24 for organizations. Video loans are for a week. "The membership gives you access to the more than 100 titles in each of the district offices as well the central multi-media library's 700 plus videos," says Blackley.

For more information about the video preview week, contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office or Blackley in Edmonton at (403)427-2127.

Contact: Ken Blackley
(403)427-2127

Variety selection, seeding calculations all on Internet

Calling up cereal crop information on Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet website will yield you more than barley, and more than just information.

"We're really excited about how we've expanded from barley, the focus of our pilot project, to other cereal crops as well as all the 'spring seeding package' that's now up on the 'net," says Murray McLelland, provincial cereal crop specialist.

That package starts with descriptions of wheat, barley and oat varieties. From the main category, an Internet user can choose to look at the type. For example wheat types such as durums, hard red spring, winter and Canada Prairie spring. Each variety is listed by name, distributor, test number and breeder. Strengths and weakness of the particular cultivar are noted in brief. The final listing tells the best suited areas to grow the variety.

This type of information was included in the department's annual variety guide. "Internet will allow us to up-date what's new in varieties more frequently," notes McLelland. "For the first time, we'll be able to tell producers about new cultivars as soon as they're available. They may still just have test numbers, and not a name."

The equivalent of the annual factsheet guide to crop varieties for Alberta will be on the Internet website. Each variety will be linked to its description.

The information package has another feature – a built-in calculator to help farmers determine both seeding rates and drill calibrations for the particular variety they're considering.

"All you have to do is answer four questions, and you'll get an instant answer to how many pounds per acre of seed you'll need," explains McLelland.

And that's not all. By adding information about the row width spacing of their seeding equipment, the program calculates how many grams per 100 feet of row they'll need to seed.

"Finally, if you click on 'drill run', you'll get information about how to calibrate your drill. You don't have to do any calculations, it's all taken care of in the program," he says.

Cereal crop information is one of about a dozen areas the department has targeted for expanded Internet information delivery through its *Roping' the Web* site. It follows the successful *Project Barley* pilot. To check out the site, go to: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/**.

Contact: Murray McLelland
(403)782-4641

Seven areas added to drought deferral list

Seven more Alberta municipalities have been designated as drought deferral areas by the federal agriculture minister.

The counties of Camrose, Flagstaff, Paintearth and Strathcona, as well as special areas two, three and four join the 13 municipalities designated in December. Those areas were in the northeast and Peace regions. The seven new areas are in the east central region.

Previously designated were the counties of Beaver, Lamont, Minburn, Smoky Lake, St. Paul, Thorhild, Two Hills and Vermilion River, and the municipal districts of Bonnyville, Mackenzie, Northern Lights, Provost and Wainwright.

"If farmers are forced to sell part of their breeding herd, the *Drought Induced Sales of Breeding Animals* program allows them to defer part of that income from their 1995 taxable income," notes Merle Good of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm business management branch in Olds.

"This gives producers a way to replace their breeding stock in the future," he adds.

The program has two deferrals. If a herd is reduced by at least 15 per cent and less than 30 per cent, producers can defer 30 per cent of the sale income. If producers are forced to sell 30 per cent or more of their breeding herd, they can defer 90 per cent of the sale. "However, if a producer buys more breeding stock in the same year, that cost must be deducted from their total sales," says Good.

Cont'd on page 3

Farmers must request the tax deferral when they file their 1995 income tax return. More information is available by contacting a district Revenue Canada taxation office.

Cattle, bison and goats over 12 months old are eligible for the program's deferral. Breeding animals also include deer, elk and other similar grazing ungulates. Horses over 12 months used for commercial production of pregnant mare's urine also qualify.

Contact: Merle Good *Doug Duff*
(403)556-4237 *(403)556-4248*

What to do with WGTPP installment

There are almost as many opinions about what farmers should do with their first Western Grain Transition Payments Programs (WGTPP) cheques as there are people who receive it.

One option, says a farm business management specialist, is a long-term investment. "Since what you're receiving is a capital payment to offset a potential loss in land value, a long-term investment which can grow over time makes sense," says Paul Gervais of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm business management branch in Olds.

Most eligible farmers and landowners should soon receive the first installment of their share of WGTPP funds. [See related story this issue.]

"The bottom line is to look at your situation, consider your goals and use the WGTPP payment for what's right for you, your family and your farm business," says Ted Darling, farm management specialist in Airdrie.

There are many types of long-term investment, ranging from GICs to purchasing a new productive asset. Some farmers may chose to use this cash to offset their increased freight costs, or to pay down debt. Others might opt for a new vehicle or a winter holiday.

Gervais says investing this "extra" cash for a time when grain prices come under pressure again is a sound strategy. His suggestion is looking at on and off-farm diversification, and value-adding.

"Many farmers have lots of ideas that aren't put into action because they don't know where to get advice or market information. Or, they don't have the extra funds they need to diversify or start a new operation," he says.

Darling suggest farmers contact their local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office to explore alternatives and or a value-added venture.

"We have many resources to help you assess production options, new market opportunities farm diversification or value-adding," says Darling. "Your key contacts are rural development and farm management specialists.

"One-on-one discussions as well as sessions on entrepreneurship, diversification and value-added activities could help you turn an idea or interest into a profitable venture," he adds.

For more information about courses, workshops and the specialist nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office.

Contact: Paul Gervais *Ted Darling*
(403)556-4250 *(403)948-8524*

First provincial ginseng annual meeting

The newly established Alberta Ginseng Association is holding its first annual general meeting March 15 and 16 in Red Deer.

Ginseng growers from across Western Canada have been invited to the joint production trade fair and general meeting.

"Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. ginseng growing perspectives from researchers and growers will be covered," says Stan Duma, the association president.

Among the speakers are Refe Gaudial, special crop researcher at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre South; John Kurt, of Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA)'s Indian Head, Saskatchewan research station; Al Oliver, a ginseng specialist from B.C.; and, Allan Smith, president of The Association of Ginseng Growers (TAGG), the provincial organization in B.C. Also on the agenda is how to identify and control plant diseases.

Registration is $50 per person for the two day event that opens on March 15 with a registration and social evening. To register, call 1-800-248-4780. For more information, contact Heinz Dyck, the association vice-president, in Rosemary at (403)378-4437.

The Alberta Ginseng Association was officially incorporated in November 1995. Its mission is to promote and support ginseng production and industry growth in the province. Currently the association has seven directors from across the province. Active grower and association memberships are both $75. For more information, contact Edie Stelkovics, 3712 Centre A Street N.E., Calgary, AB T2E 3A6.

Alberta producers grow American ginseng, a fleshy rooted, perennial herb. Commercial ginseng is grown from seed. It takes three to four years to produce a large enough root to harvest.

Ginseng is considered a restorative herb with a long tradition of use both in Asia and North America. Although separated by distance and variety type, both Chinese and North American

Cont'd on page 4

natives believed ginseng provided vitality, relieved stress, increased energy and prolonged life.

The North American ginseng variety was discovered by Europeans near Montreal in 1716. Today Canadian sales top $200 million annually.

Contact:	Heinz Dyck	Trevor Schoff
	(403)378-4437	(403)384-3737

Saskatoon production workshops for beginners plus

Whether you've never grown saskatoon trees or have started in the business but want to know more, the annual *Saskatoon Production Workshop* is for you.

The Fruit Growers' Society of Alberta (FGSA) workshop will be held at Sherwood Park's Festival Place on March 23. It features two morning programs – one for people new to the sector and one for those already in the business. The groups are reunited for the afternoon sessions.

"This is an opportunity to learn about the industry, visit with some successful growers and share some of their insights," says Don Fossum, one of the workshop organizers.

Opening keynote speaker is Sandra Purdy, a Saskatchewan grower, who will discuss what's exciting about the bush fruit industry's future.

Lloyd Hausher, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's fruit specialist, starts off the level one program with information about establishing and managing an orchard. He'll discuss a number of production factors including preferred land type, site preparation, water source, equipment requirements, how to plant and care for trees, and controlling weeds and diseases.

"We'll also introduce these potential new growers to our association and the **Prairie Fruit Journal**," notes Fossum.

Three other Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialists are featured in the level two program. Janet Panford, of the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks, and engineering technologist John Kienholz will combine to discuss cooling freshly picked fruit and demonstrate a cooling model. Protective clothing specialist Karen Malyk will explain how to use pesticides safely.

Also on the level two agenda are pruning, grassing in and a grower panel discussing hardy varieties, equipment ideas, when to buy seed and when to plant.

In the afternoon, Purdy returns to describe the Saskatchewan Fruit Growers's Association strategic plan to the year 2000. She'll also lead a round table discussion of relevant issues from that strategy.

An eight-person grower panel will describe how they harvest saskatoons. There's also a session on mulching. The final activity is the FGSA general meeting.

Workshop registration is $30 for FGSA members and $45 for non-members. For more information about the workshop, contact Fossum in Sherwood Park at (403)467-6992.

Contact:	Don Fossum	Lloyd Hausher
	(403)467-6992	(403)362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Biodynamic agriculture workshop/seminar tonight

Biodynamics is a type of sustainable agriculture introduced back in 1924. Tonight (Feb. 26) in Nisku, an Ontario farmer will describe the system he began using in Germany in the late 1960s. Bernhard Hack has given workshops on the model since 1983 and also helped farmers convert to biodynamic agriculture. Hack will present a workshop February 26 at the Nisku Inn. The workshop/seminar is sponsored by Sustainable Agriculture and Global Environments (SAGE), the Sustainable Agriculture Association (SAA) and Earthkeeping. For more information, contact Dennis Vriend in Nisku at (403)955-2851.

Conservation family and group honored

Mason Farms and the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) are respectively the 1996 Conservation Farm Family and Conservation Producer Group of the Year. Both awards were presented last week at the *AgriFuture Farm Technology Expo* in Red Deer. Albert and Emma Mason, and Barry and Dawn Mason farm near Delia. They've been interested and concerned about soil conservation since the early 1960s when they first started using a chaff saver to collect feed for cattle. Over the last 30 years, they've moved to continuous cropping. Albert and Barry are the founding and only president and

Cont'd on page 5

secretary-treasurer of the Delia C-2000 club, a past winner of the producer group award. The Masons can be contacted at (403)364-2129. CARA was established in 1979 and conducts applied research and demonstration projects in the special areas and the M.D. of Acadia. Land management and soil conservation issues are a particular concern in this east central area, traditionally described as semi-arid. Stubble height management research is a current project. CARA was recognized in part for excellence in transferring valuable information and research. For more information about CARA, contact manager Dianne Westerlund in Oyen at (403)664-3777. The annual awards are presented by the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) and sponsored by the **Western Producer**, Toronto Dominion Bank, Monsanto Canada and the Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA). For more information about the awards, contact Russ Evans in Calgary at (403)934-6911 or toll-free at 1-800-251-6846.

Olds College selling dairy herd and quota

Olds College is selling its dairy herd and quota. The decision was recently reaffirmed by the college's board of governors and comes after a provincial rationalization report recommended Lakeland College as the lead college to supply dairy courses. Now, Olds College is completely dispersing its herd, quota and equipment. Four separate packages can be bid on. They include 62 Holstein Cows, 47 heifers, a fluid quota of 1,210 litres and a variety of equipment. Anyone interested in seeing the herd, its health records, equipment, registration and production records can visit the college's dairy barn on March 11. The deadline for tenders on the packages is March 29. For more information, contact Jim Freeman, farm services co-ordinator at Olds College, at (403)556-8367.

WGTPP payments due in late February

Nearly half a billion dollars in Western Grain Transition Payments Program (WGTTP) will be coming into the pockets of Alberta farmers and landowners. Most eligible farmers and landowners should soon receive the first installment of their share of WGTPP funds. While the each landowners' exact amount hasn't been determined, these cheques will represent about three-quarters of the total amount. The average amount per acre is expected to be about $18, but the actual amount landowners will receive varies widely throughout the province. The WGTTP is a federal program set up to distribute a one-time $1.6 billion payment to eligible farmland holders. The payment is compensation for the elimination of the Western Grain Transportation Act (WGTA) subsidy to railways. As known as the Crow Rate, railroads received a subsidy for transporting Prairie grains to port. The subsidy hindered value-added commodity development. However, its end also means higher freight rates for farmers. The WGTTP is a one-time compensation for the changed policy. The program is administered by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) in Regina. Questions and concerns can be directed to the toll-free line at 1-800-667-9962.

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AGRI-NEWS

March 4, 1996

Elementary students invited to Get into the Program

Getting into the program means rural elementary students have the opportunity to see their artwork in a new interactive farm safety game.

"It's our newest farm safety contest and the winning artwork will be featured in an electronic version of our former **Child's Guide to Farm Safety** resource," explains Jacqueline Galloway, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development farm safety consultant.

As with the traditional guide, students are invited to draw a farm safety picture with a slogan. The top 10 entries will be featured as hot spots that pop-up in the CD-ROM software.

Contest brochures, shaped like a CD holder, include an entry form. They've been mailed to rural schools throughout the province. The entry deadline is June 15.

"Through the generosity of the project sponsors TransAlta Utilities and NOVA Corporation, we're offering tremendous prizes," notes Galloway. Students who submit winning entries will receive their own personal copy of the software and a game t-shirt. Their school will also receive a free copy of the software.

"Names of everyone who enters the contest will go into a draw to win a computer with CD-ROM for their school," she adds.

For more information about the contest, contact the farm safety program office in Edmonton at (403)427-2171. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Jacqueline Galloway*
(403)427-4259

Agriculture
Week'96
March 3-9,1996
Adding Value

This Week

Elementary students invited to Get into the Program 1
Be on a sharp lookout 2
Sharp-edged safety tips 2
Dairy seminar focuses on the future 3
Best producer tips featured at Western Canadian Dairy Seminar 3
Pre-conference activities return to dairy seminar 4
MAP audio, video offer expires March 31 4
Farmers passing up educational bursary 4
Briefs 5
Coming agricultural events 7

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Be on a sharp look out

About 100 cattle producers and feedlots have taken a pointed look at how they dispose of agriculture sharps as part of an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development evaluation project.

Agriculture sharps include used needles, syringes, blades and empty pharmaceutical containers that could cause a puncture or cut. "We asked the co-operating producers to tell us how they dispose of sharps as well as take part in a one-year pilot disposal project," explains Karen Malyk, protective clothing specialist with the home economics and 4-H branch. Malyk is working with the department's farm safety program and five beef specialists on the project that started last fall.

Hard plastic containers were supplied to 100 producers. They are testing different sized containers as well as rating convenience, cost and types of lids.

As well, five disposal alternatives are being piloted in different municipalities across the province. Those alternatives include taking containers to landfills, veterinarians and hospitals for incineration or other disposal.

As part of the project, feedlots were provided with 45 gallon disposal drums for their sharps. Full drums are picked up and delivered to an incinerator.

"From the feedback we've received, so far incineration appears to be the preferred disposal method," she notes.

"One of the most interesting elements of our data to date is why producers have bought into sharps disposal project," she adds.

Needle injuries, or the personal safety aspect, was the main reason for the program, and many producers say they or someone they work with had been pricked by a needle. "However, they also think sharps disposal is important to environmental safety as well as contributing to a positive image of the cattle sector," says Malyk.

The Alberta Cattle Feeders Association introduced a quality assurance training program last year that emphasizes responsible disposal practices. An example is a Ponoka area feedlot that made arrangements for particular wastes to go to designated areas for disposal. For instance, needles go for incineration, empty bottles to the landfill with county and public health approvals and old drugs to the annual Great Drug Roundup.

"We'll continue to work with the livestock industry to promote safe handling and disposal of agriculture sharps as well as ensure effective disposal and environmental protection," she adds.

One of the project's goals is to estimate the amount of sharps waste generated. "These statistics may give the rest of Canada a benchmark to plan future projects, design containers and co-ordinate disposal sites. We've already had inquiries from Ontario and PEI about our program," says Malyk.

For more information about agriculture sharps, contact your local municipal agricultural fieldman, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development beef specialist, veterinarian or the farm safety program in Edmonton at (403)427-2171. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Sharp edged safety tips

Preventing injuries and minimizing environmental impact from agriculture sharps is as easy as a puncture-proof container with a well-sealed lid.

"It's a multi-benefit prevention tool," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Karen Malyk.

"Putting old, bent or used needles in a container prevents accidental injury such as stepping on a needle left at a chute," she adds. "As well, it keeps sharps separate from other garbage and your farm site cleaner."

Agriculture sharps include used needles, syringes, blades and empty pharmaceutical bottles.

While livestock producers could buy special medical waste containers for their sharps, Malyk suggests recycling a container. "A five-gallon oil bucket or bleach bottle can work as long as the container you choose is puncture-proof and has a lid that seals," she says. A lid that seals is particularly important to keep out curious children and animals and when moving the container to a disposal site.

For convenience, she suggests keeping a small container close to where the sharps are used. A larger container, for bottles or to collect all the sharps before disposal, could be kept in a safer place away from livestock.

"Injuries can occur very easily when handling, discarding, transporting or sorting sharps. Being aware of the hazards of working with sharps decreases the chance of injury," she notes. "That's one of the reasons for our farm safety program pilot project about agriculture sharps." [See separate story.]

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Dairy seminar focuses on the future

One aspect of focusing on the dairy industry's future is where Western Canadian producers fit in the international marketplace. Feature sessions at the 14th annual *Western Canadian Dairy Seminar* will do just that.

The seminar runs March 12 through 15 in Red Deer. It opens with pre-conference tours, workshops and an evening reception. The first full day and the wrap-up morning have plenary sessions. Four concurrent sessions run on March 14.

"This conference design enables an expanded, broad program that appeals to producers, agribusiness people and others in the dairy industry," says Brian Cameron, chair of the seminar advisory committee and an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development dairy management specialist.

"Part of the seminar's continuing success has been the strong mix of speakers with Alberta, national and international perspectives on the industry," he adds.

The international stage will include a concurrent session on day two titled "Keys to success in managing 150 cow herds: An international perspective and implications for Western Canadian producers". Speakers will represent Canadian, European, Australian and U.S. points of view.

Plenary sessions on March 13 follow three themes – position for production, peaking with persistency and the information super highway. The first two themes will feature four U.S. based speakers. Their topics include body condition at calving, matching protein delivery to milk production and strategies for successful fat supplementation.

"Our surfing the net session is a quick look at what's available on Internet. We're also offering a hands-on 'getting your learners license' workshop as a pre-conference session," notes Cameron.

Technology is also in the spotlight at one of the concurrent sessions on March 14. New technology topics include using DNA technology to alter milk composition, enzymes and enzyme enhancers, nutrition to turn on genes and emerging technologies using somatotropin and monensin.

"This is probably the highest tech session we've ever had at the seminar," says Cameron.

Other concurrent session themes are reproduction, nutrition and immunity, nutrition and environment, and an economic perspective on planning for the future.

The wrap-up morning sessions will look at mastitis prevention and treatment, and replacement heifers.

"We're repeating a Thursday evening feature session. Last year there was a BST debate. This year, it's production tips from producers. We're asking people to call, fax or write about their best idea or invention. The eight best will be featured at the seminar and the audience will select the winner," he says.

Registration rates are the same again in 1996 following a hold-the-line approach that has been taken over the past few years. Single registration is $165 or $150 for each additional person from the same farm or organization. There's a one-day rate of $85, except for Friday morning which is $50. The student rate for the seminar is $50.

For registration information, call the University of Alberta at (403)492-2601.

Cameron also encourages conference goers to reserve their accomodation as soon as possible. "The world junior curling championships are at the same time, so hotel space is at a premium," he says.

Contact: *Brian Cameron*
(403)427-8906

Best producer tips featured at Western Canadian Dairy Seminar

Dairy producers who made a good idea or invention work to improve their operation are invited to submit their innovations to a special production tips session at the *Western Canadian Dairy Seminar*.

"We want you to call or fax us with the best idea or invention that's helped you on your farm," says Brian Cameron, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development dairy management specialist.

"It could be equipment or tool you designed or a tip for maximizing feed intake, reducing mastitis, calf rearing, getting cows on feed in early lactation, providing a comfortable environment for your cows, labor management or some other aspect of your dairy operation," he adds.

Producer tips should be faxed to session co-ordinator Steve Radostits in Leduc at (403)986-9766, or call him at (403)986-3269.

The eight best tips will be presented at a evening session on Thursday March 14 at the seminar. The audience will select the winner by voting for their favorite idea. An ice cream social is part of the evening's activities.

The 14th annual *Western Canadian Dairy Seminar* runs March 12 through 15 in Red Deer. It includes pre-conference tours and workshops and two and half days of plenary and concurrent sessions.

For more information or to register, contact the seminar office at the University of Alberta at (403)492-2601 or fax (403)492-4265.

Contact: *Brian Cameron*
(403)427-8906

Pre-conference activities return to dairy seminar

The bus will roll out on a second annual pre-conference tour of Red Deer dairy farms on March 12.

"We're following up on the success of the first pre-conference tour we did last year," says Brian Cameron, an organizer of the *Western Canadian Dairy Seminar* in Red Deer March 12 through 15.

The day-long tour will travel to three area dairy farms. The focus is on progressive, innovative dairy managers. The $25 registration fee includes the tour, transportation, lunch, coffee and GST.

"We're also expanding our pre-conference activities to include two afternoon workshops," notes Cameron, a dairy management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Participants are offered the opportunity to get their learners' license on the information super highway in one of those sessions. Registration for the hands-on workshop is limited. It costs $75.

The driving instructor is Mark Varner, an extension dairy specialist from the University of Maryland. He'll also be speaking on the information super highway during the first full day on the conference, March 13.

The other pre-conference workshop is specifically designed for new and potential new dairy producers. Making a successful start in the dairy business will cover how to talk to your banker, sources of agricultural credit, making the right decisions on housing and equipment, and income and cost alternatives. This session is $25.

"The seminar program has two other new features," he notes. One is a day trip to West Edmonton Mall for accompanying persons. The other is a post-conference Rocky Mountain getaway.

For more information or to register for these activities, contact the seminar office at the University of Alberta at (403)492-2601 or fax (403)492-4265.

Contact: *Brian Cameron*
(403)427-8906

MAP audio, video offer expires March 31

You can bring the *1996 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP)* experts into your home by buying audio and video tapes of their presentations, but you have to place your order before March 31.

"Audio tapes of 19 concurrent session speakers and video tapes of the three plenary speakers are all available," notes Doug Barlund, chair of MAP'96.

"It's an opportunity for people who were there to take away a tape for further review and for people who couldn't attend to find out what was said about a particular topic," he adds.

Video tapes are $20 each and audio cassette tapes are $10. Each order requires $3 for postage and handling. GST is included in the price. To order the tapes or for a list of speakers and topics, call the MAP hotline at **1-800-387-6030**. Order forms are also available from all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices.

Barlund notes all three plenary speakers received high ratings from the conference participants. They were agricultural economist and futurist Lowell Catlett, the Agri-Food Competition Council's Larry Martin and psychologist Pat Pitsel.

Concurrent session topics were related to the conference theme of mastering your markets. Sessions included livestock, special crop, grain, short-term economic and long-term economic outlooks. Along the same theme were presentations on gathering market intelligence, how to find and get market information, products with pizzazz and presence, the WGTA, positioning yourself for profit, the changing world of trade and adventures in (diversified) ventures.

The 18th annual conference for leading-edge farmers was held in Red Deer Jan. 30 through Feb. 1.

Contact: *Doug Barlund*
(403)556-4245

Farmers passing up educational bursary

Only 15 of over 1,000 eligible farmers have taken advantage of a learning opportunity sponsored by the Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI).

"It is a wonderful opportunity," says Arla Trueblood, FBMI Northwest region representative. "FBMI will help to cover transportation, registration and other costs of a farm management course up to a value of $500."

But, of the $20,000 set aside in the budget for bursary payouts, only $6,500 has been allocated.

Alberta farmers are eligible for the bursary if they've taken 80 hours of FBMI training during the first three years of the program. Management topics were as diverse as estate planning, marketing, computers, environmental law, cost of production studies, record keeping and communications. Farmers were sent all of the information regarding their eligibility in an October mail-out.

Cont'd on page 5

To use the bursary, a farmer just has to contact the program's provincial co-ordinator, Anita Lunden to receive the forms and ensure that the course is eligible for bursary funding. Lunden is as close at a toll-free call. Dial 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator and ask for 556-4278.

After attending the course, expense receipts are sent in. Half of the total course costs, to a maximum of $500, are reimbursed to the participant.

Programs sponsored by FBMI aren't eligible for bursary funding unless they take place over 200 km from the person's home. Then transportation costs would qualify.

"Courses need not even be in Alberta," says Trueblood. "As long as it is a farm management program, the person attending can use his or her bursary finding. Farmers can also attend more than one course, as long as the total bursary payout does not exceed $500."

"Some eligible farmers used their bursary to attend Managing Agriculture for Profit conference in Red Deer. They reported that the opportunity to hear quality speakers with the latest information, and have half of their cost covered, was to good to pass up," she says.

"The good news is that it is not too late to use the bursary fund," she adds. The program runs until the end of 1996

"I hope that people will take advantage of the bursary fund," says Trublood. "They have shown that they are interested in taking farm management training. It is to their advantage to use it."

For more information about the bursary fund, contact the FBMI regional representative in your area. The southern representative is Craig Smith in Glenwood at (403)626-3448 or fax (403)626-3461. The central rep is Delin Sheehan-Millang in Stettler at (403)742-5474 or fax (403)742-7527. The northeast rep is Elma Herde in Ardmore at (403)826-1959 (phone and fax). The peace rep Nan Bartlett is in Fairview at (403)835-4288 or fax (403)835-2899. Trueblood in Dapp at (403)954-3745 (phone and fax).

Contact: *Arla Trueblood*
(403)954-3745

Agri-News briefs

Environmental law in agriculture seminar coming to the Peace

An environmental law in agriculture seminar will be held in five Peace region locations between March 11 and 15. They start in High Prairie on March 11, move to the Saskatoon Lake Agriculture Society Hall on March 12, Fairview on March 13, Manning on March 14 and finish in High Level on March 15. The one-day seminar provides insightful and practical legal information farmers can use in their farm management plans. Agricultural lawyer Julian Bodnar describes environmental problems a farmer may encounter. Registration is $30 plus GST. For more information, contact a Peace region Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office. To register call 1-800-FARMLAW (327-6529) or (306)664-00033.

SARA annual meeting March 19

The Southern Alberta Research Association (SARA) will hold its annual meeting March 19 in Taber. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. at the Taber Provincial Building. Guest speaker Hazen Gehue will provide an introductory look at global positioning systems (GPS). A GPS application is the subject of one of its research projects. Non-members are welcome to attend the meeting. SARA is the newest of several applied research associations across the province. For more information about SARA or the annual meeting, contact SARA manager Michelle Gietz at (403)545-2080 in Bow Island or SARA president Phil Hierath in Milk River at (403)647-2249.

SARDA 9th annual meeting March 7

The Smoky Applied Research and Demonstration Association (SARDA) is holding its 9th annual meeting March 7 in Falher. The evening meeting begins with supper and includes the general meeting and highlights of 1995 SARDA activities. Also on the agenda is a presentation on the Farm Income Stability Program (FISP). Please pre-register by calling (403)837-2211. Registration is $15.

Managing change theme for national farm business management conference

Managing change is a matter of mindset, and the Canadian Farm Business Management Council's national conference will examine that mindset March 17 through 20 in Winnipeg. Jerry Gray, a management professor at the University of Manitoba, will provide the theme address. Conference topics include production clubs, effective farm managers, developing export markets, creative finance, managing policy change, tracking farm management trends and travelling the information highway. Daily and complete conference registration packages are available. For more information, call the conference hotline in Ottawa at (613)237-9060 or fax (613)237-9330.

Registration deadline tomorrow (March 5) for grain marketing seminar

Two keynote speakers will discuss a variety of issues and opportunities in grain marketing in a one-day seminar in Westlock March 7. Jonathan Schleuter, executive vice-president of the Pacific Northwest Grain and Feed Association from Portland, Oregon, and Ken Beswick, Canadian Wheat Board commissioner, will discuss the continental grain market, rail line rationalization, dual marketing, Canada's export advantages, U.S. Farm Bill changes and the future. Registration is $35 and includes lunch. The registration deadline is March 5. To register, contact the Westlock Alberta Agriculture district office at (403)349-4465. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Think safety first with pesticide certification

Farmer Pesticide Certificate and Lawn and Garden Pesticide Dispenser courses are available by home study through Olds College. The courses teach the how, why, when, where and what of using pesticides safely, correctly and efficiently. The farmer course is $75 and the law and garden course is $50. For more information, contact Olds College's Educational Development Centre at (403)556-8355.

Courses abound in Wetaskiwin this week

Alberta Agriculture's Wetaskiwin district office plans a busy week of seminars during Agriculture Week. A day-long silage seminar runs March 5 at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum. A cereal, oilseed and pulse outlook is scheduled for the Wetaskiwin Provincial Building on March 6, followed by a livestock outlook the next day. On March 8, there's a Farm Income Stability Program (FISP) meeting at the Lakedell Agricultural Centre. Also during March is a canola production seminar on March 15. For more information, contact the Wetaskiwin district office at (403)361-1240.

Coming agricultural events

Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference
Olds College
Olds March 3-5
Betty Vladicka-(403)422-1789-Edmonton

1996 Joint Convention of the Canola Council of Canada and the U.S. Canola Association
Memphis, Tennessee March 3-5
Maureen Smit-(204)982-2103-Winnipeg, Manitoba

48th Calgary Seed Fair & Hay Show
Stampede Park
Calgary March 3-6
Michel Higginbotham-(403)261-0114-Calgary;
1-800-661-1260

Agriculture Week
Alberta March 3-10
Communications Division-(403)427-2127-Edmonton

45th Annual Poultry Industry Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer March 4-5
Martin Zuidhof-(403)427-4608;
Fred Schuld-(403)427-4592-Edmonton

Provincial Swine Seminars
Lethbridge March 4
Red Deer March 5
St. Paul/St. Vincent March 6
Barrhead March 7
Art Lange-(403)427-5096-Edmonton

Alberta Egg Producers Board Annual Meeting
Capri Centre
Red Deer March 5
Alberta Egg Producers Board-(403)250-1197-Calgary

Silage Seminar
Reynolds-Alberta Museum
Wetaskiwin March 5
Wetaskiwin Co-op-(403)352-9155; Wetaskiwin Alberta
Agriculture district office-(403)352-1240-Wetaskiwin;
Leduc district office-(403)986-8985-Leduc

Manure Management Information Seminars
Neerlandia March 5
Leduc March 6
Kathryn Olson-(403)428-6981-Edmonton

Farm Ownership and Estate Planning
Drumheller March 5
Rumsey March 7
Kelly Eskeland-(403)823-3669-Drumheller

Basic Pruning Course
Crop Diversification Centre North
Edmonton March 5-6
March 7-8
Nigel Bowles-(403)489-1991-Edmonton

Cereal, Oilseed & Pulse Outlook
Wetaskiwin Provincial Building
Wetaskiwin March 6
Alberta Agriculture district office-(403)352-1240-Wetaskiwin

Agrimoney'96 – 9th Annual European Agrimonetary Conference
The Churchill Inter-Continental Hotel
London, England March 6
Agra Europe (London)-44 1892 533813 or
fax 44 1892 544895/524593-London England

Smoky Applied Research and Demonstration (SARDA) 9th Annual Meeting
Knights of Columbus Hall
Falher March 7
SARDA office-(403)837-2211-Falher

Livestock Outlook
Wetaskiwin Provincial Building
Wetaskiwin March 7
Alberta Agriculture district office-(403)352-1240-Wetaskiwin

Grain Marketing Issues and Opportunities
Westlock Community Hall
Westlock March 7
Alberta Agriculture district office-(403)349-4465-Westlock

11th Annual Peace Country Classic Agri-Show and Seed Fair
Evergreen Park
Grande Prairie March 7-9
Grande Prairie Regional Agricultural
Society-(403)532-3279-Grande Prairie

National Farm Safety Week
Canada March 7-13
In Alberta contact the farm safety program office at
(403)427-2171 in Edmonton

Soil Conservation Canada Annual Business Meeting
Travelodge Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario March 8
SCC office-(613)236-1133-Ottawa, Ontario

Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association Spring Conference and Annual Meeting
Capri Centre
Red Deer March 8-10
Darell Kavich-(403)632-7399-Vegreville;
Darcee Robertson-(403)946-4032-Crossfield

Landscape Property Maintenance
Devon Botanic Garden
Devon March 9
Gordon Nielson-(403)987-2064-Devon

Environmental Law in Agriculture
Alberta Agriculture Building, High Prairie March 11
Saskatoon Lake Agriculture Society Hall March 12
Fairview College, Fairview March 13
M.D. of Northern Lights Admin Building, Manning, March 15
Rural Community Hall, High Level March 15
Alberta Agriculture Peace region district
offices-(403)835-2241 or 1-800-449-2106-Fairview;
(403)837-2211 or 1-800-769-2264-Falher;
(403)937-3712-Fort Vermilion;
(403)538-5285-Grande Prairie; (403)523-6500-High Prairie;
(403)836-3351 or 1-800-769-2261-Manning;
(403)864-3597 or 1-800-769-2260-Spirit River;
(403)524-3301 or 1-800-449-2105-Valleyview

So You're Deciding to Transfer the Farm
Hanna March 12
Jeff Millang-(403)742-7500-Stettler

Plan Before You Plant—A Seminar for Potential Market Garden and Commercial Herb Growers
Camrose March 12
Three Hills March 13
Lacombe March 14
Margo Lawrence-(403)679-1210-Camrose;
Jackie Anderson-(403)443-8525-Three Hills;
Lynn Stegman-(403)782-3301-Lacombe

14th Annual Western Canadian Dairy Seminar
Capri Centre
Red Deer March 12-15
Sharon-(403)492-2601-Edmonton;
Brian Cameron-(403)427-8906-Edmonton

Forages in a Reduced-Till System Workshops
Newbrook March 12
Mayerthorpe March 15
Alan Macaulay-(403)674-8213;
Ben Froebel-(403)674-8305-Barrhead

Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association Annual Conference and Trade Show – Managing Residue for Profit
Canada Centre Building, Regina Exhibition
Regina, Saskatchewan March 14-15
Doug McKell-(306)695-4234-Regina, Saskatchewan;
Juanita Polegi-(306)786-1526-Regina, Saskatchewan

Athabasca Farm Women's Conference
Athabasca March 14
Rose Markowski-(403)675-2252-Athabasca

Intagra Display Schedule for March/96
Rodeo & Agri-Trade Show, Medicine Hat March 14-16
Peace Region Science Fair, Fairview March 21-22
Spirit River and Grande Prairie, March 25-29
Earl Royer-(403)451-5959-Edmonton

Canola Production Seminar
Wayside Inn
Wetaskiwin March 15
Alberta Agriculture district office-(403)352-1240-Wetaskiwin

Alberta Ginseng Association Annual Meeting
Red Deer March 15-16
Trevor Schoff-(403)384-3737-Sedgewick; or 1-800-248-4780

Dried Flowers Course
Devon Botanic Garden
Devon March 16
Gordon Nielson-(403)987-2064-Devon

Canadian Farm Business Management Council's Managing Change: A Matter of Mindset
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba March 17-20
CFMBC office-(613)237-9060-Ottawa, Ontario

9th International Symposium on Virus Diseases of Ornamental Plants
Herzliya, Israel March 17-22
Ortra Ltd.-03-517-7888-Tel Aviv, Israel;
e-mail orta@trendline.co.il

Peace Region Forage Seed Production and Marketing Seminar
Dunvegan Motor Inn
Fairview March 19-20
Calvin Yoder-(403)837-2211-Falher; 1-800-769-2264

Southern Applied Research Association (SARA) Annual Meeting
Taber Provincial Building
Taber March 19
Michelle Gietz-(403)545-2080-Bow Island or
e-mail sara@mlc.awinc.com;
Phil Hierath-(403)647-2249-Milk River

Food Beverage Canada Export Development Workshop
Blackfoot Inn
Calgary March 19
FBC-(403)486-9679-Edmonton or 1-800-493-9767;
Alberta Food Processors Association-
(403)444-2272-Edmonton

Woodlot Information Seminar
Pincher Creek March 20-21
Doug Pickell-(403)627-3130-Pincher Creek;
Ken Glover-(403)422-4565-Edmonton or 1-800-619-5732

Composting Makes Compost Update Conference 96
Olds College
Olds March 20-23
Kelly MacKinnon-(403)556-4683-Olds;
Kim Ayrton-(403)556-4745-Olds;
Tom Clark-(403)556-4644-Olds;
e-mail kayrton@admin.oldscollege.ab.ca

Saskatoon Production Workshop
Festival Place
Sherwood Park March 23
Don Fossum-(403)467-6992-Sherwood Park

Developing Your Food Business – Thinking Like a Customer Seminars
Agriculture Building, Lacombe March 26
Agriculture Building, Camrose March 27
Provincial Building, Smoky Lake March 28
Margo Lawrence-(403)679-1210-Camrose;
Lynn Stegman-(403)782-3301-Lacombe; Sharon
Stollery-(403)645-6301-St. Paul

2nd Annual Wild Rose Classic Bison Show and Sale
Northlands Park
Edmonton March 27-30
Ken Olson-(403)584-2482-Fort Assiniboine

5th Biennial Sulphur Markets – Today and Tomorrow International Symposium
Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City Hotel
Washington, D.C. March 27-29
Harold Weber-(202)331-9660-Washington, D.C.

13th Annual Pedigreed Seed Show
Northlands AgriCom
Edmonton March 27-30
Michele Weitzel-(403)471-7260-Edmonton

Open Your Home to a Bred and Breakfast Business Workshop
Olds March 28
Kathy Lowther-(403)556-4220-Olds

Northlands Farm & Ranch Show
Northlands Park
Edmonton March 28-31
Michele Weitzel-(403)471-7260-Edmonton

Olds College Open House
Olds College
Olds March 30
Shelley Brolsma-(403)556-4611-Olds

Canadian Grains Council 27th Annual Conference
Rimrock Resort Hotel
Banff April 1-3
CGC office-(204)942-2254 or fax (204)942-0992-Winnipeg,
Manitoba

50th Anniversary AIA Annual Meeting & Joint Meeting with SIA – Megatrends in Agriculture: The Next 50 Years
Lakeland College campus
Lloydminster April 11-13
Irene Wenger-(403)853-8128-Vermilion

Pasture Management Workshop
Provincial Building
Wetaskiwin April 11
Alberta Agriculture district office-(403)352-1240-Wetaskiwin

Woodlot Management Course
Devon Botanic Garden
Devon April 12
Gordon Nielson-(403)987-2064-Devon

Intagra Display Schedule for April/96
Ag Expo'96, Kindersley, Saskatchewan April 12-13
Agriculture Education Network Annual Conference,
Camrose April 18
Earl Royer-(403)451-5959-Edmonton

Pond Raising Rainbow Trout
Devon Botanic Garden
Devon April 13
Gordon Nielson-(403)987-2064-Devon

11th National Soil Conservation Week
April 15-21
(Alberta contacts)Tamara Lewis or
Barb Shackel-Hardman-(403)422-4385-Edmonton

Super Horse Event
Vermilion campus, Lakeland College
Vermilion April 18-20
Gary Cooper-(403)853-8587-Vermilion

Out of Season (Goat) Breeding Seminar
Country Lodge
Innisfail April 20
Lesley Jackson-(403)985-3863-Calmar

Alberta Emu Association Seminar
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer April 24
K. Hermary-(403)784-3379-Clive;
L. Richard-(403)963-4523-Stony Plain

Forest – Fish Conference: Land Management Practices Affecting Aquatic Ecosystems
Marlborough Inn
Calgary May 1-4
Kerry Brewin-(403)221-8360-Calgary; or 1-800-909-6040

Agricultural Ambassador Fair
Stettler May 1-2
Cindy Dixon or Betty Gabert-(403)427-2171-Edmonton

Intagra Display Schedule
Agricultural Ambassador Fair, Stettler May 1-2
Earl Royer-(403)451-5959-Edmonton

Alberta Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting
Black Knight Inn
Red Deer May 2-3
Coreen Moroziuk-(403)427-4248-Edmonton;
e-mail moroziu@agric.gov.ab.ca

Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors
Victoria Conference Centre
Victoria, B.C. May 26-29
CCGD office-(514)982-0267-Montreal, Quebec

NABC 8 Agricultural Biotechnology: Novel Products and New Partnerships
Rutgers State University
New Brunswick, New Jersey June 5-7
Jill Braun-(908)932-9271 or fax (908)932-1187-New Brunswick, New Jersey; e-mail braunj@gandalf.rutgers.edu;
National Agricultural Biotechnology Council (NABC)
office-(607)254-4856-Ithaca, New York;
e-mail NABC@cornell.edu

Alberta Dairy Congress
Black Gold Centre
Leduc June 6-7
Congress office-(403)986-5454-Leduc

Intagra Display Schedule for June/96
Reynolds Alberta Museum, Wetaskiwin June 8-9
Lloydminster Exhibition, Lloydminster June 10-13
Earl Royer-(403)451-5959-Edmonton

Agricultural Biotechnology Conference (ABIC'96)
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan June 11-14
The Signature Group-(306)934-1772-Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

6th International Conference on Computers in Agriculture
Marriott CasaMagna Hotel
Cancún, Mexico June 11-14
Fedro Zazueta-(904)392-7260-Gainsville, Florida;
e-mail FSZ@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Cowboy Poetry Gathering of '96
Pincher Creek Agricultural Grounds and Community Hall
Pincher Creek June 14-16
Bev-(403)628-2115-Pincher Creek

Canadian Farm & Industrial Equipment Institute 29th Annual Summer Conference
Jasper Park Lodge
Jasper June 14-17
CFIEI office-(905)632-8483-Burlington, Ontario

Direct Seeding Demonstration Days
Castor June 11
Taber June 25 (rain June 26)
Red Deer June 27 (rain July 4)
Michelle McKinnon-(403)948-8512-Airdrie

Food & U Day – A Festival of Learning About What We Eat
Edmonton Research Station, University of Alberta
Edmonton June 15
Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Science-(403)492-3239-Edmonton

4th International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources
Leipzig, Germany June 17-23
Conference program office-(39-6)52255871-Rome, Italy;
e-mail ICPPGR@fao.org

International Grains Council Conference 1996
Canary Wharf
London, England June 18
IGC office-0171-513 1122 or fax 0171-712-0071-London, England; e-mail igc-fac@int-grains-council.org.uk

Alberta Poultry Industry Workshop
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer June 18-20
Rod Chernos-(403)948-8533-Airdrie

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede
Calgary July 5-14
Exhibition & Stampede office-(403)261-0101-Calgary; or 1-800-661-1260 (Canada & U.S.)

AIC Annual Meeting – Water Resources and Agriculture: Protecting our Future
Lethbridge July 7-11
Dr. Gerald Mears-(403)327-4561-Lethbridge;
Brent Paterson-(403)381-5515-Lethbridge

6th World Rabbit Congress
Toulouse-Labège Diagora Congress Centre
Toulouse, France July 9-12
INRA-(fax)33 61 28 53 19-Castanet Cedex, France;
e-mail: lebas@toulouse.inra.fr

Canadian Seed Growers' Association 92nd Annual Meeting
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba July 10-12
CSGA office-(613)236-0497-Ottawa, Ontario;
e-mail seeds@odo.eis.ca

AG-Grow 2000 Field Days
Emerald Agricultural College
Emerald, Queensland, Australia July 11-13
James Dein-079 824244-Emerald, Queensland, Australia

Canadian Bankers Association Agriculture Finance Conference Outside the Corral: Stampede of Changes and Opportunities
Palliser Hotel
Calgary July 14-16
Jennifer Fisk-(403)263-1454-Calgary

Intagra Display Schedule for July/96
Alberta Provincial Service Board Tour, Brooks July 15-16
Vermilion Fair, Vermilion July 24-27
Exhibition and Stampede, Medicine Hat, July 31-August 3
Earl Royer-(403)451-5959-Edmonton

Western Stock Growers' Centennial Cattle Drive
Buffalo to Medicine Hat July 20-27
Rhonda Clark-(403)250-9121-Calgary

2nd Annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic
Olds College
Olds July 31-August 2
Henry Wiegman-(403)422-4444-Edmonton

8th Symposium of the International Organization of Science and Technology Education (IOSTE)
Edmonton August 17-24
Raja Panwar-(403)427-2984-Edmonton-
RPanwar@edc.gov.ab.ca;
Sharon Jamieson-(403)492-5339-Edmonton-
sharon.jamieson@ualberta.ca

Seed Analysis and Grading for Registered Seed Establishments
Olds College
Olds August 6-8
Olds College Educational Development Centre-(403)556-8321

Seed Analysis and Grading for Registered Seed Establishments Workshop
Olds College
Olds September 9-11
Olds College (403)556-8321-Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canda-(403)495-5395-Edmonton or (403)292-4105-Calgary

Specialist Workshop on Seed Analysis of Grasses and Legumes
Olds College
Olds September 11-13
Olds College (403)556-8321-Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-(403)495-5395-Edmonton or (403)292-4105-Calgary

1996 National Extension Technology Conference
Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia September 28-October 2
Bob Molleur-(706)542-8965-Athens, Georgia;
Bryan Shipman-(706)542-5387-Athens, Georgia;
Don Hamilton-(706)542-5350-Athens, Georgia;
listserv at NETC96-L@uga.cc.uga.edu

18th Canadian Waste Management Conference
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba October 7-10
Jennifer Adams-(613)723-3525-Nepean, Ontario

2nd World Congress Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences
Jaarbeurts, Beatrix Building, Congress Centre
Jaabeursplein, The Netherlands October 20-24
FBU Congress Bureau-31.30.253.5044/2728;
Utecht, Netherlands; e-mail l.donkers@pobox.ruu.nl

Northlands Farm Fair
AgriCom
Edmonton November 1-10
Michele Weitzel-(403)471-7260-Edmonton

Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association Fall Conference and Seminar
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton November 8-10
Darell Kavich-(403)632-7399-Vegreville;
Darcee Robertson-(403)946-4032-Crossfield

Alberta Horticulture Congress
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton November 7-9
Simone Demers Collins-(403)422-1789-Edmonton

2nd National Conference on Dairying
Toronto November 13-14
Kerri-Sue Lang-(905)342-2099-Toronto, Ontario

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.
   Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
   Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
   Olds College (403)556-8355 e-mail for **The Connection** 73543.2137@compuserve.com
   Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1996**? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates?

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). **Please include your telephone number**:

Please return this form by* May 23, 1996 *to:

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6
FAX (403)427-2861

("Coming agricultural events" is published four times a year in **Agri-News**. The next list will be **June 3, 1996.** Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca.)

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AGRI-NEWS

March 11, 1996

First poultry producers' conference coming in June

There are poultry conferences and there are poultry conferences, but it's hoped the Alberta Poultry Producers Workshop will find its own niche with the province's poultry sector.

"It's the first of its kind designed specifically for producers," says Rod Chernos, co-ordinator of poultry programs for Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The workshop, scheduled for June 18 through 20 in Red Deer, is already attracting interest he adds. "As an organizer, it's great to see that people believe this type of workshop will be useful."

Both plenary and concurrent sessions are on the program. "In concurrent sessions, participants will hear from experts in their own area. Also featured are facilitated case studies where they can tackle actual problems that occurred at a farm level," he notes.

Joint sessions will include more generic subjects such as pest control techniques, proposed provincial water legislation, how to compost mortality, handling manure and poultry welfare.

Producers can register for the workshop through their marketing board. For more information about the workshop, contact Chernos in Airdrie at (403)948-8533. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Rod Chernos
(403)948-8533

February good for pea producers

February brought best of season price offers to Alberta producers for both edible green and yellow pea varieties says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Edible dry pea prices scrambled to a $1.25 per bushel premium thanks to the weakening feed pea market," notes Matthew Machielse.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

First poultry producers' conference coming in April 1

February good for pea producers 1

Next year canola price prospects good 2

Don't let high grain prices stop diversification 2

Too early for market weather concerns 3

Anticipating a hold-on year for cow-calf producers 3

$100/cwt. lambs likely this spring 4

Changing attitudes and taking action AFAC meeting theme 4

Plant tissue culture course April 17-19 5

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

The best reported price was $7 per bushel for green peas, with yellows only 15 cents behind based on a delivered plant basis. "The scarcity of good quality peas at the producer level is resulting in some nice returns on storage for producers able to hold product," he adds.

New crop edibles are being offered in Alberta at $6 per bushel for green and around $5.80 per bushel on yellow edibles. The feed market is holding and offers close to $5, although some contracts have been offered to levels of $5.40 per bushel. Strong fundamentals are keeping contracting to a minimum.

Alberta growers could also benefit from production news in the international market. France is expected to reduce pulse acreage a further 10 per cent in the coming year, following consecutive declines in 1994 and 1995. Pea production there could easily fall below 2.5 million tonnes in 1996.

"This is significant because France traditionally produces about 70 per cent of the European Union's pulse production," explains Machielse. Denmark, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain are other minor contributors.

As well, the European's pulse subsidy regime is not expected to change in 1996, even though attempts were made to improve levels relative to the grains and oilseeds. The strong cereals outlook is having similar effects on acreage shifts in the EU. as in North America.

However, the Australians have returned to the pulse market with force, producing above average levels. They reported the largest single pulse shipment of 44,000 tonnes this past month destined for Spain.

"The economies of scale in moving these larger cargoes translates into better farmgate returns with lower basis costs," he says. "Canada's growth in the past couple of years has enabled our traders to take advantage of similar bulk shipment via the west coast. The U.S., on the other hand, continues to move export product, mostly processed edible grades, by container."

In other special crop markets, mustard growers were greeted with a very volatile yellow market as traders scrambled to cover commitments over the past month. Bids reached 24 cents per pound for top grade product. Both brown and oriental varieties stayed relatively flat. Bids had remained between 17 and 18 cents per pound. "Old crop prices at this level will likely help mustards' cause on the acreage front," says Machielse.

Canary seed enquiries continue to indicate rising acreage in 1996. Producers can currently contract new crop at 20 cents per pound in Alberta on the first 500 to 700 pounds. "A commitment at this level should cover production costs on most farms," he says. "The CWB new Crop Durum PRO could swing acreage in this crop's direction if the price cut is down more than expected."

Contact: Matthew Machielse
(403)427-5387

Next year canola price prospects good

A relatively tight soybean supply demand balance combined with a decline in canola acreage should support canola prices in the coming crop year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

The world supply/demand balance for oilseeds is less tight than for either the wheat or coarse grains. However, soybeans, easily the most important of the oilseed crops, **are** relatively tight. The stocks/use ratio for world soybeans for 1995-96 is estimated at 12.2 per cent as compared to a five-year average of over 15 per cent.

"With oilseed acreage area in the upcoming season expected to be steady to down, prospects appear good that prices will be well supported in the coming crop year," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch.

Canola traded in a fairly narrow range during February. "Farmers holding tight to old crop supplies have provided price support, and slow exports and a weak vegetable oil market have limited the upside," he notes.

"Flaxseed futures were in much the same boat with little buying interest to get things interesting," he adds. Through the end of January 1996, Canadian canola exports were down sharply from a year ago.

At mid-February, exports were at 1.6 million tonnes versus almost 2.6 million tonnes last year. Flaxseed exports at 403,000 tonnes are down about five per cent from last year's pace.

Contact: Al Dooley
(403)427-5387

Don't let high grain prices stop diversification

Exceptional wheat and barley prices are tempting Alberta farmers to grow more of these traditional crops and cut back on canola and field pea acreage. But, an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development crop specialist says farmers shouldn't interrupt the momentum of crop diversification.

"There are a number of reasons why continuing crop diversification makes sense and reverting to old ways gets the industry as a whole into trouble," says the Olds-based Mark Olson.

One basic reason is the cyclical nature of markets. "Prices don't stay high forever, and markets have a habit of changing direction very quickly. Now is a good time to diversify when you can afford it," he explains.

Cont'd on page 3

The second reason has to do with customer relations. "Canola and field pea sectors – including farmers – have worked hard to set up infrastructures, markets and getting acreage up to where Western Canada is a recognized player in the game. Significant acreage reductions could translate into a reputation as an unreliable source and as a result lose customers and close crushing and processing plants," he explains.

Agronomics, in particular, crop rotation is another reason farmers should continue to grow more than just wheat and barley. "Disease plays a major role in what crops can be grown year-after-year on the same piece of ground. Farmers who don't follow rotations are playing Russian roulette," says Olson.

Economics, in particular the end of the Western Grain Transportation Act subsidy, will eventually have to be considered when farmers are choosing what crops to grow. "In short, farmers will be forced to diversify because of the cost of moving grain to export ports," he says.

Niche markets will develop. "The sooner you find your niche and get comfortable growing new crops, the better your chance of sustaining your farm in the long run," he adds.

For more information about crop diversification ideas and the agronomics of growing those crops, contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office and be put in touch with a pulse and special crop specialist.

"You can also contact the department's special crop marketing specialist for information about marketing diversified crops," notes Olson. Matthew Machielse is in Edmonton and can be reached at (403)427-5387. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Mark Olson*
(403)556-4220

Too early for market weather concerns

Weather is always the bottom line in crop production, but it's a little early to be talking drought in the U.S. midwest says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Dry conditions in the U.S. Great Plains are already getting people talking about drought in 1996 before winter crops have even left dormancy," notes Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch.

"But that kind of talk isn't surprising given the extremely tight wheat and coarse grain markets. The importance of the weather over the next number of months will amplify," he adds.

Feedgrain stocks are tight. Globally only 37 days of available feedgrain stocks are expected at the end of the 1995-96 season.

The U.S. situation is even tighter. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) February Crop Report further reduced both world and U.S. feedgrain ending stocks for this crop year. Its projected U.S. corn stocks/use ratio for 1995-96 is now 5.4 per cent or less than 20 days usage. The five-year average is almost three times greater at 14.4 per cent

However, farmers worldwide are already planning to seed more coarse grains this season. "Prices are attractive, but producers will also need good growing conditions to bring up stocks to near normal levels," notes Dooley.

Contact: *Al Dooley*
(403)427-5387

Anticipating a hold-on year for cow-calf producers

1996 will be a year for cow-calf producers to survive, not enjoy, says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"On the upside, there's a good chance that the situation will improve in 1997 and subsequent years, as the cattle cycle runs its course," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch.

Currently, the cattle cycle is in a liquidation phase. "The first signs of herd liquidation can be seen in both the U.S. and Canada," he notes.

Specifically in Canada, beef heifers are going to slaughter and not being kept for breeding. "Moving heifer calves and even bred heifers into feedlots and eventually down the road as beef is a relatively painless way of reducing herd size, except for those who specialize in selling bred heifers," Gietz explains.

"While there is this bad news in the market, there are at least three positive factors in the current cattle cycle that could turn it around faster," he adds.

One is heavy carcass weights. "While big cattle meant a small increase in inventories, it also resulted in a large increase in production and pressured cattle prices lower. Now, a small *decrease* in inventories will result in a large decline in production, turning around the cycle a little quicker," he explains.

Second, high grain prices and the depressed feeder cattle market that are causing cow-calf producers pain, will also prompt a quicker turnaround in herd numbers.

"Finally, for the first time, beef exports have the potential to help the cattle cycle turn around," he says. North American beef exports to Asia have the potential to increase again in 1996. A 13 per cent increase in U.S. exports will absorb a one per cent increase in beef production.

Contact: *Ron Gietz*
(403)427-5376

High feeding costs cut hog profits

High feed costs have dampened what would normally be a very profitable seasonal situation for hog producers says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Hog prices were up, above both last year's and the five-year average, but feed costs were up, too," says Joe Rowbottom of the market analysis and statistics branch.

"Until firmer estimates start arriving for next year's feed crop, there won't be relief on the feed side," he adds. "And if some analysts' predictions hold, firm hog prices expected in the second quarter and early third quarter could be in jeopardy."

Some analysts in the U.S. are predicting severe corn shortages in the upcoming months. This could possibly cause sow liquidation or shipments of lighter hogs. This added pork supply would, in turn, pressure prices downward.

However, Alberta prices in late February did hover around $1.63/kg. As well, there are attractive opportunities to hedge second and third quarter production.

Rowbottom is forecasting Index-100 Alberta hogs to average $1.60/kg in March and for prices to rise to a $1.69/kg average by June before they start a gradual decline.

Contact: Joe Rowbottom
(403)427-4011

$100/cwt. lambs likely this spring

A combination of factors should please Alberta lamb producers by keeping slaughter prices around the $100/cwt. level this spring says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Those factors include continued weakening of the Canadian dollar relative to U.S. currency, strong demand, lower U.S. supplies, high breeding stock prices, good feeder lamb prices and a forecast of reduced imports," says Don Hansen of the market analysis and statistics branch.

In Edmonton during February, slaughter lambs traded between $97.50 to $105.50/cwt. and averaged $102.50/cwt. Strong prices were also reported in the feeder lamb class (61 to 80 lbs.) with prices ranging from $101 to $120/cwt. with a $113.40/cwt. average. In Fort Macleod, slaughter lambs traded near the $102/cwt. level.

Hansen does advise producers to keep an eye on current prices and marketing opportunities, in particular on what's happening in the tight U.S. market. Analysts are predicting much the same trend as in 1995 when prices peaked as limited supplies were marketed during the summer. "As well last year, lower supplies resulted in higher price variations than in 1994," he notes. "Producers may be able to capitalize on these variations and enhance their returns."

Contact: Don Hansen
(403)427-4011

Changing attitudes and taking action AFAC meeting theme

Five speakers will attempt to answer the question of whether the livestock sector is reacting to or leading consumers' attitudes about animal care at the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care's (AFAC) third annual meeting and conference.

The conference plus the association's annual general meeting will be in Red Deer on March 20.

"Conference speakers work on the front lines of the issues and look at challenges the livestock sector faces," says Susan Kitchen, AFAC manager. Kitchen is on the conference agenda to tell about AFAC activities.

Joy Ripley, Alberta SPCA president, will discuss her organization's balancing act. Another Alberta-based speaker is Scott Dawson. The RCMP corporal is head of Edmonton's national security investigation section and he'll discuss whether extremist violence is a concern in Alberta.

What producers can do about the impact animal rights has on their business is part of Alan Herscovici's topic. Herscovici, a Montreal-based communications consultant, specializes in sensitive social and environmental issues. One of his recent projects is **Issues**, a teachers' guide to sensitive agricultural issues. At the AFAC conference, he'll discuss both the impact animal rights has on agricultural businesses and what producers and other agribusiness people can do.

Mike Cooper is someone who has taken action. Cooper is manager of Grober Inc., a milk replacer/feed company. With experience gleaned from being a target, Cooper will discuss taking action—opening the doors or hiding.

Registration is $25 at the door and includes lunch. "Please phone or fax your registration in advance," asks Kitchen. Call AFAC in Calgary at (403)777-0445 or fax (403)777-0447.

AFAC was founded three years ago by a number of livestock commodity organizations with a mandate to promote responsible animal care.

Contact: Susan Kitchen
(403)777-0446

Plant tissue culture course April 17-19

Participants can learn the day-to-day operation of a plant tissue culture laboratory at a three-day course in Edmonton April 17 through 19.

Basic tissue culture techniques used to micropropagate seed potato, fruit crops, landscape plant material and other selected species will be covered in the course.

"Our emphasis is on laboratory training and will include handling tissue culture material in the greenhouse," notes Kris Pruski, tissue culture specialist at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North.

The course will take place at the centre and is a joint project of the centre and two commodity organizations, the Fruit Growers Society of Alberta and the Edmonton Potato Growers.

Among the course topics are principles of plant micropropagation, laboratory organization and operation, laboratory techniques, federal regulations for seed potato propagation and applying tissue culture techniques in propagation of small fruit, foliage plants and seed potatoes.

Registration is $250 plus GST and the deadline is April 4. Cheques can be made payable to the Fruit Growers Society of Alberta and sent to the Crop Diversification Centre North, RR6, 17505 Fort Road, Edmonton, AB, T5B 4K3.

For more information about the plant tissue culture course, contact Pruski, Mohyuddin Mirza, Vikram Bisht or Pat Fulton in Edmonton at (403)422-1789. Call the same number to register. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact:	*Kris Pruski*	*Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
	(403)422-1789	*(403)422-1789*

Agri-News briefs

'96-'97 International wheat crop forecast in

The International Grains Council has forecast a slight increase in world wheat output for the 1996-97 crop year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. The forecast is 553 million tonnes, up from this season's 535 million tonne world harvest. "A crop of this size will **not** have much of an impact on the overall supply/demand balance in the coming crop year," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch. The expected low carry-in stocks will mean that total supplies will be basically unchanged from the 1995-96 crop year. "If usage levels remain at the 550 million tonne level – modestly below five-year average levels – there will be no significant rebuilding of stocks in the new crop year," he adds. "As a consequence, it's likely 1996-97 prices should be strong again." Good pricing opportunities should occur over the growing season unless conditions are ideal he notes. For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at (403)427-5387. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

1996 year of wide-basis in slaughter cattle market

This year is shaping up as the "year of the wide-basis" in the slaughter cattle market says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. The price spread between Alberta and the U.S. market averaged around $11/cwt., compared to $9.40 last February and $6.83 in February 1994. "I'm forecasting the price spread to remain wide into the spring at around $10/cwt.," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch. "Given the circumstances, if you're looking at forward contract offers, any Alberta-U.S. price spread under $10/cwt. qualifies as a good deal," says Ron Gietz. The wide spread between our market and outside markets have been both a disappointment and source of low Alberta prices. Gietz predicts Alberta direct sale steer prices to average $77/cwt. in March. This nearly $13 lower than the 1995 March average of $89.70/cwt. Like last year, Gietz expects prices to fall between now and August. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at (403)427-5376. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Community action Australian style

Australia's highly successful Landcare program is the subject of a workshop tomorrow (March 12) in Edmonton. Geoff McFarland, who played an integral role in the program, will share his thoughts on how the Australian approach to community action on natural resource management issues might be used in Alberta. Landcare is a national program that combines local initiatives and government support to address resource management issues through co-ordinated efforts by voluntary land conservation groups. The Edmonton workshop will be held at the Public Works Building (6950-113 Street) boardrooms 1A and 1B. For more information, contact Len Fullen at (403)427-5359 or Betty Gabert at (403)427-2171.

11th annual Aggie Days in Calgary March 20-23

Calgary Exhibition & Stampede's Agriculture Pavilion will overflow with urban students and families March 20 through 23 during the 11th annual *Aggie Days*. Aggie Days exhibitors are volunteers who set up displays, make presentations and guide visitors. Saturday's family day includes fun events such as dressing a scarecrow and cow pie tosses. For more information, contact either Harley Yuffe at (403)830-5610 or Lorna MacMillan at (403)261-9316.

Export development workshop March 19

Food Beverage Canada (FBC) and the Alberta Food Processors Association are offering a day-long, intensive export development workshop in Calgary March 19. The workshop offers practical sessions on market research, assessment and entry, packaging and shipping, financing and evaluating export readiness. The Alberta workshop is one of four across Western Canada and part of FBC's launch of its export platform. This includes a complete package of services, training, cost-sharing and other assistance available to companies. For more information, contact FBC in Edmonton at.(403)486-9679 or 1-800-493-9767, or AFPA at (403)444-2272.

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AGRI-NEWS

March 18, 1996

CANADIANA

APR 10 1996

It's happened to them

Eight Alberta students can say it's happened to them. They are the creators of the winning television and radio farm safety commercials in a second annual provincial contest.

Their winning entries came from 93 television and 63 radio spots submitted to the *It Can Happen to Me* contest.

Last fall, contest sponsors UFA, CBC Alberta News and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program invited rural junior and senior high school students to submit teen-to-teen commercials promoting farm safety. The contest was expanded from the first year format to include radio commercials and junior high students.

For the second consecutive year, a Sundre High School entry captured the top television prize. Heather Scott's talking animals entry was co-produced by Katie Jo and Jason Grahn along with Matthew Marr of Cremona High.

The animated cartoon artwork of Kenlon Clark of St. Paul Regional High School was awarded second place.

Matt Pederson, with the help of classmate Kallum Morland, of Fort Assiniboine School, produced the first place radio commercial. Their production emphasized the operator, not the equipment, may be the dangerous part of the farm safety equation.

Lisa Ferriss of North Star used an attention getting "Hey, You!" theme in her second-place radio commercial.

Winners will share $6,000 in scholarship. First place for television is $3,000 and second is $1,500. For radio, the winner receives $1,500 and second place, $1,000.

The winners' schools also receive prizes. A video camera goes to the school with the winning television entry and tape recorder to the school with the best radio submission.

"It was hard to choose the winners," says Jacqueline Galloway of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program. "It's difficult because the entries are fabulous and you can tell each one of the young people poured their heart and soul into their entry," she adds.

"We're thrilled with the response," says Jim Watt, of UFA's member relations. "The momentum from last year grew with more entries and from more places across the province. We're encouraged by the enthusiasm young Albertans have for the project and the messages they created."

Both the top radio and television commercials will be professionally produced and then aired by CBC. As part of their prize, the students get to be part of that production.

"This contest couldn't be a success without the students and their terrific ideas. We're more than pleased to be part of the partnership bringing those messages to their peers and the rest of Alberta," says Laurie Long, senior producer of CBC Alberta News.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

It's happened to them 1

Partnership formed to develop and market triticale 2

Software directory can save you time 2

Your computer one variable in choosing ag software 3

February weather averaged warm and dry 3

Farm input pricing not unfair 4

Agriculture and Food Council calls for new members 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

UFA and CBC will honor the winners during special presentations at their schools this spring.

Contact: Jacqueline Galloway (403)427-4259
Brian Gray (403)468-2352
Jim Watt (403)258-4508

Partnership formed to develop and market triticale

United Grain Growers, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Alberta Agriculture Research Institute (AARI) have joined forces to develop and market more and better triticale varieties for western Canada.

The agreement gives Proven Seed, UGG's seed brand, exclusive rights for five years to market and distribute future triticale varieties developed by the department's Field Crop Development Centre in Lacombe. All triticale varieties developed under the terms of the agreement will be distributed through the Proven Seed retail network of all UGG and Pioneer Grain elevators, as well as several independent Proven Seed retailers.

"Triticale, as a crop is gaining acceptance in Canada as both grain and forage crop," says Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's minister. "However, there needs to be a more co-ordinated force in the development, technology transfer and marketing of this crop to ensure its future."

The department has developed and released two varieties that have gained more acreage outside of Alberta than in the province. A new early maturing spring variety, Pronghorn, was registered in 1996 and will be marketed through Proven Seed as part of this agreement.

"Recognizing the potential of the crop and the need for an industry partner in the product development and marketing, the department and its Field Crop Development Centre, actively sought out industry participation," says Paszkowski.

Proven Seed was committed to the development of the crop and had the product development and marketing knowledge needed to make triticale an important grain and forage crop. This is the first time the department has actively sought out industry involvement in the development of a crop and is looking forward to forming other partnerships where it will benefit producers and the industry.

"We feel the partnering will help our department be more efficient, target variety development and research to meet the market needs, and lead to increased productivity and market opportunities for the producer," adds Paszkowski.

Triticale, an annual cereal crop, is a hybrid of wheat and rye. It comes in both spring and winter types. Much of the genetic development and research on this crop over the last 20 years has taken place at the Field Crop Development Centre. Pika triticale, a winter variety, and Wapiti, a spring variety, were developed at Lacombe. Proven Seeds currently is the exclusive marketer of Pika.

While triticale isn't a large product group, it complements Proven Seed's cereal and forage line-up well, says Bruce Harrison, forage product manager. "Researchers and farmers are finding many benefits from including triticale as part of a rotation," says Harrison. "It is a multi-functional crop, because it's a good source of feed as pasture or silage."

"Triticale has excellent potential as a feed grain as well as a high yielding, good quality forage. There is also good potential in the alcohol industries," says Don Salmon, the triticale breeder at Lacombe. Producers should see the new variety Pronghorn, a new spring sown variety, available beginning in 1997.

The Field Crop Development Centre will develop the varieties, carry out genetic and agronomic research and provide the scientific expertise needed by producers and marketers. Proven Seed will contribute funding to the breeding efforts, conduct field testing in Saskatchewan and Manitoba to ensure their agronomic fit in Western Canada and develop the marketing plan. The Alberta Agriculture Research Institute will manage the royalty benefits which will be reinvested in the triticale breeding program.

"Proven Seed is committed to seed research, local testing and new market opportunities for farmers," says Harrison. "This agreement is proof of that commitment."

Proven Seed is the seed business unit of UGG. With over 500 retail locations, Proven Seed is the largest seed retailing network in Western Canada. Proven Seed strives to add value to farmers' operations through an extensive local performance testing program, global seed research, seed quality control and new market opportunities.

Contact: Bruce Harrison (204) 944-2212
Dr. Don Salmon (403)782-4641

Software directory can save you time

The **Agricultural Software Directory** can ease the time and effort needed to find the right agricultural software.

"To do a good job of finding what you need, you need to know what's on the market that might be suitable. With hundreds of packages available, the research alone can be intimidating," says Bruce Waldie, provincial computer applications specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"The **Agricultural Software Directory** helps farm computer users by providing one list of all agricultural software that we can find in North America," he adds.

Cont'd on page 3

A co-operative effort of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the 1996 edition lists over 775 packages from over 125 manufacturers.

The directory is divided into types of software – such as financial record keeping and physical record keeping – product name, and the manufacturer. It lists hardware requirements, the product's price range and a brief description of what the package does. The manufacturers' addresses are in a separate table so that users may contact them directly for more information about the software and local dealers.

Copies of the 1996 Agricultural software directory can be ordered from the Alberta Agriculture's publishing office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB, T6H 5T6, or call (403)427-0391. It's also available from Agricultural Computer Extension, Ag. Representatives Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, P.O. Box 1030, Geulph, ON, N1H 6N1.

"AgSoft is also available as an on-line searchable database on the Farm Business Management Information network (FBMInet)," There are over 20 places across Canada to access the network, and it's also available through Internet.

Alberta has three FBMInet computer nodes. One is Olds at (403)556-4104, Edmonton at (403)438-2209 and Lacombe at (403)340-4845.

"Or call me in Olds at (403)556-4243 for more information," says Waldie. In Alberta, government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Bruce Waldie*
(403)556-4243

Your computer one variable in choosing ag software

One of the first considerations when choosing agricultural software is what's available for your machine says Alberta Agriculture's provincial computer applications specialist.

"If you look through the 1996 **Agricultural Software Directory**, you'll quickly notice the vast majority of products are available for IBM compatible computers," notes Bruce Waldie.

The Agsoft directory also lists software available for Apple][, CP/M, Macintosh and Commodore computers. However, over 90 per cent of the listed packages are for IBM compatible, followed by Apple][and Macintosh at a virtual tie at 15 and 14 per cent respectively.

"What this sample says is that if you want the greatest selection of software now and in the future, buy a computer that is IBM compatible," he says.

The second main consideration is what you want to do with the software. The directory lists several types including financial record keeping, physical record keeping, decision aids/analysis and marketing. "Every year we've seen a decrease in the relative amount of software for financial records and an increase in all the other types," he notes.

"This trends says to me that the first thing people try to do with their computer is financial records, but there's a growing trend to use its capabilities as a decision support tool," he adds. "It's especially encouraging that the number of decision support packages has grown from 30 in 1985 to over 150 in 1996. It is only when you use your computer for this type of active management process that it will pay for itself economically."

The **Agricultural Software Directory** provides an easy and quick way to see what types of software are available. [See related story for more details.] It's available from Alberta Agriculture's publishing office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB, T6H 5T6, or call (403)427-0391.

It's also available from Agricultural Computer Extension, Ag. Representatives Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, P.O. Box 1030, Geulph, ON, N1H 6N1. The directory can also be accessed through the Farm Business Management Information network (FBMInet) bulletin board system.

Contact: *Bruce Waldie*
(403)556-4243

February weather averaged warm and dry

February was slightly warmer and also drier than normal says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's weather resource specialist.

"The average temperature was 0.7 degrees above normal and total precipitation was 61 per cent of normal," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch.

"February is the driest month of the year," he notes. February 1996's precipitation was 6.3 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 16.9 mm. The average monthly temperature for February was -8.7°C, 0.7 degrees above the long term average of -9.4°C.

These temperature and precipitation averages are based on data recorded at 29 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Many Alberta locations reported temperatures up to two degrees above normal. "This is a switch from the usual trend, as February is usually the third coldest month of the year," he says.

Cont'd on page 4

"Above normal temperature were welcome after a cold start to the year," he adds. January temperatures were the coldest since 1982, and that cold weather continued into the first week of February. Warm Pacific air dominated the weather for the next two weeks. Temperatures returned to near normal for a few days before the month closed off with a blast of cold arctic air from the north.

Edson reported the greatest monthly temperature departure, 2.5° warmer than normal. The normal temperature for February in Edson is -9.6 degrees.

High Level, at a -17.8° average, reported the coldest monthly temperature of all the stations. This average, though, was 0.3 degrees warmer than the monthly normal temperature of -18.1°C.

The northeast, consistently one of the drier areas of the province in recent months, reported the most precipitation in the province during February. "Amounts ranged between eight and 30 mm, or 60 to 210 per cent of normal," notes Dzikowski.

Most other locations reported below normal precipitation totals, although amounts varied from 2 to 30 mm, or 10 to 210 per cent of normal.

For more information, contact Dzikowski in Edmonton at (403)422-4385. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Farm input pricing not unfair

A report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and

Agri-Food investigation into farm input costs didn't provide enough evidence to conclude Canadian farmers are the victims of unfair input pricing.

"The investigation came from questions and concerns from producers about steady and significant increases in fertilizer, fuel and agricultural chemical prices in the past several years," says Julie Toma of Alberta Agriculture's market analysis and statistics branch.

As a result of these concerns, the Parliamentary committee conducted a review of pricing procedures in fertilizer, fuel and pesticide sectors to determine reasons for the substantial and long-lasting price increases. The committee's report concluded Canadian producers are subject to prices comparable to their competitors.

As an internationally traded commodity, fertilizer is subject to global trends. Among the factors playing a role in the price upswing are reduced exports from Middle Eastern and former Soviet countries, low grain inventories, low soil nutrient carryovers and higher farm incomes.

"While these factors contribute to price increases, they don't explain the price difference between fertilizer purchased in the U.S. and Canada," adds Toma. "The study concluded the differences are due to variations in currency exchange rates and local supply and demand factors, and that the price anomalies are short-lived."

As far as fuel costs are concerned, the committee's report found gas prices reflect retail operating costs and competition in the local market place more than the product's value. "In other words, retailers monitor the prices their competitors post, then adjust their own. Unlike a formal agreement, which is price-fixing, this practice is perfectly legal," she explains.

The study also reported pesticide prices in Canada are generally the same across the country, while prices in the U.S. for the same product often vary substantially.

Contact: Julie Toma
(403)427-4011

Agriculture and Food Council calls for new members

With nine members stepping down this spring, the provincial Agriculture and Food Council is looking for new council members.

The 23-member council's purpose is to lead and guide Alberta's agriculture and food industry in becoming globally competitive, profitable, environmentally sustainable and valuing its people. The council promotes this vision by identifying obstacles to industry success; acting as a sounding board and advisor to industry and government; and, encouraging the formation of strategic alliances and partnerships in the industry and government.

Members serve a three-year term and attend five or six meetings a year.

The council's objective is to have a membership that reflects the breadth and depth of Alberta's agriculture and food industry notes Waters, who encourages individuals to submit nominations.

"The council is an independent body. We're not beholden to a financial sponsor, and our terms of reference are our own," says Waters. "Even though many of the current council members were nominated by organizations they belong to, our members come to the council as representatives of the whole industry rather than to advance the interests of any particular group."

Nominees are selected for their proven ability to promote positive change, their demonstrated interest in achieving the Creating Tomorrow vision and their flexibility in working with others toward a common purpose. Experience in and knowledge of the industry are also important factors.

Cont'd on page 5

Written nominations can be submitted to past council chair Jim Waters until March 31, 1996. Nominations will be reviewed by the past chairman and a panel selected from the industry.

Send nominations to: Jim Waters, Past Chairman, Agriculture & Food Council, #301, 7000-113th Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, fax (403)427-3005 or e-mail agric_food@tnc.com.

Contact: Jim Waters (403) 281-7101
Barb Shroh (403) 427-2417
Malcolm Barr, Chair 1995/96 (403)672-7428

Agri-News briefs

Open your home to a bed and breakfast business

Come to a one-day course in Olds March 28 and see if a bed and breakfast business is in your future. "As travellers and visitors seek greater variety in their accommodations, bed and breakfasts are becoming increasingly popular," says Kathy Lowther, rural development specialist in Olds. "Hosting people in your home or farm is a unique opportunity for people wishing to start a business or diversity their income," she adds. The course runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Olds Provincial Building basement conference room. The registration fee is $35 and includes both GST and lunch. For more information or to register, contact Lowther at (403)556-4220. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Second entry date for ram test station March 27

March 27 is the second entry day for the *1996 Alberta Ram Test Station*. Contributors are encouraged to pre-register their rams and only those who have pre-registered are guaranteed a spot. On entry day, breeders should bring signed registration applications, signed transfer and three-generation pedigrees for all rams submitted to the test station. The test station is at Olds College and is a joint project of the college, the Alberta Sheep Breeders' Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For more information, contact Mike Rieberger at (403)224-3743 or the test station office at (403)556-3090.

Thinking like a consumer in your food business seminar

A one-day workshop, offered in three locations, gives you time to consider your food business through the eyes of your customers. *Developing your food business...thinking like a customer* runs March 26 in Lacombe, March 27 in Camrose and March 28 in Smoky Lake. Workshop topics include labelling, packaging, distribution channels and pricing. The $40 registration fee includes GST and lunch. For more information, contact Lynn Stegman in Lacombe at (403)782-3314, Margo Lawrence in Camrose at (403)679-1210 or Sharon Stollery in St. Paul at (403)645-6301.

AFAC annual conference/meeting Wednesday

The Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC) is holding its annual meeting this week, March 20, in Red Deer. Changing attitudes and taking action is the meeting theme. Speakers include Alberta SPCA president Joy Ripley and communications consultant Alan Herscovici. Topics include animal rights' impact on your business, whether extremist violence is a concern in Alberta, how an Ontario veal company took action to correct public perception and AFAC activities. Registration is $25 at the door. Advance phone-in registration is encouraged. Call Susan Kitchen at (403)777-0445 in Calgary to register or for more information.

Co-ops as an economic development alternative March 25

A one-day workshop in Edmonton March 25 will examine co-operatives as a community economic development alternative. Workshop participants will learn what distinguishes co-ops from other forms of business, when and how co-ops fit with current approaches to community economic development, non-traditional forms of co-operatives such as health care, examples of successful co-ops and how businesses can network as co-ops to improve their competitiveness. Workshop speakers are experts on co-operatives from all regions of Canada. Registration is limited to 50 people and the fee is $187.25 (includes GST). For more information, contact Richard Stringham at the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) in Edmonton at (403)451-5959.

SARA annual meeting tomorrow

Global positioning will be featured at the annual meeting of the Southern Applied Research Association (SARA) tomorrow (March 19) in Taber. Hazen Gehue of Terramatic Technologies in Calgary is the featured speaker. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. and is open to non-members. For more information, contact Michelle Gietz at (403)545-2080.

Olds Colleges now offers applied degree in hort technology

Olds College will begin offering a degree in applied horticulture technology next fall. The program will be unique in Western Canada. The college began developing the four-year program last April after extensive industry consultation. Work experience will be integrated with advanced technical and management training. Once implemented, the program expects to graduate 40 students every year. For more information, contact Bill Souster, dean of land and horticultural sciences, at (403)556-8260.

Canada Grains Council annual conference April 1-3

The Canada Grains Council will hold its 27th annual conference April 1 through 3 in Banff. Changing realities – the new reality is the conference theme. Session topics include adapting to and profiting from change, changing global markets, changing global policies, the changing role of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, cost recovery and commercialization, changing projects and North American transportation issues. Registration for members is $375 and $450 for non-members. For more information, contact the council in Winnipeg at (204)947-0992 or fax (204)942-2254.

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AGRI-NEWS

March 25, 1996

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Students plunge into new educational kit

High school students in Western Canada will soon be transported into the future via a multi-media kit about biotechnology.

A Quick Dip in the Gene Pool will be unveiled on April 1 in Edmonton. The kit provides a high-tech look at the impact of biotechnology on our food supply.

"The future of education and the future of agriculture come together in this new educational tool," says Betty Gabert, agricultural awareness specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Gabert also co-ordinates the province's Agriculture in the Classroom program.

The kit uses up-to-date computer and multi-media technology and includes two video tapes, an audio cassette, computer disks, CD-ROM disk and printed guide.

Estimates are the 2,500 kits produced have a retail value of at least $2.5 million. Thanks to sponsorship and co-operation between industry and government, the kits will be distributed at no cost to every high school in the four western provinces by September.

Gabert describes the project as "a celebration of education and agricultural sectors working together to enrich our country's most precious resource, its youth."

Project funding came from the agriculture industry. Agricultural research scientists contributed their expertise as the project was developed. The educational advisory team included education departments and teachers in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. [A list of sponsors follows the release.]

The kit meets the requirements of science, technology and society curriculum for high schools and has been endorsed by the education ministries in all four provinces.

"Integrating this resource into existing curricula was a key part of making the resource something teachers could and would use," says Gabert. "Response from field tests as well as a survey of all Alberta high schools has been enthusiastic."

The kit's debut will take place in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Western Canadian Agricultural Education Council on April 1. The official unveiling and a demonstration is at 1:30 p.m. in Boardroom B of the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, main floor, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

Contact: *Betty Gabert*
(403)427-2171

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Students plunge into new educational kit 1

Dose determines dress 2

Breaking the fabric cap habit 3

Use the pesticide container collection program 3

Asian export seminar and buyers mission April 22-24 3

Competition good medicine for soil 4

Composting goes bigger than the backyard 5

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – Publishing Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Background –

- Sponsors of the Biotechnology kit are:
  - Ag-West Biotech Inc. – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
  - Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – Agriculture in the Classroom Program and Communications Division
  - Alberta Agriculture Research Institute
  - Alberta Canola Producers Commission
  - Alberta Pool
  - Association of Alberta Agricultural – Fieldmen
  - Canadian Institute of Biotechnology
  - DowElanco Canada Incorporated
  - Monsanto Canada Incorporate
  - Saskatchewan Canola Producers – Commission
- Technical advisors for the project are:
  - Dr. Larry Kawchuk, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Research Station, Lethbridge
  - Dr. Murray McLaughlin, Ag. West Biotech
  - Dr. Ralph Christian, Alberta Agriculture Research Institute
  - Dr. John Taylor, Manitoba Agriculture and Food
- The project development team members are: project co-ordinator Betty Gabert; multi-media technical design Rob Thirlwell; and, researcher/writer/editor Patricia Porter. Gabert and Thirlwell are from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Porter is from The Write Answer Marketing & Communications.
- The project was initiated in the spring of 1994 by the Western Canadian Agricultural Education Council. The council was formed in late January of the same year.
- The kit can be used in a classroom or for independent study.

Dose determines dress

Warning symbols on the product label and the annual *Blue Book* are guides to the type of protective clothing you need to wear when handling a particular pesticide says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"The warning symbols and other information about how toxic the particular product is can help you make common sense decisions about extra layers of protective clothing or equipment you might need," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate.

"For example, if the product is corrosive, choose to wear goggles and extra layers such an apron. This is especially important when pouring or mixing a concentrate. Getting that product on any part of your skin is dangerous," she adds.

Generally, the more toxic the pesticide, the more protection you need to wear. Product labels will tell you both the degree of hazard and the dangers.

Degree of hazard is shown by a shape. The octagon, or a stop sign shape, indicates danger and a high hazard. Extra protection is required when working with a product that has this symbol.

Moderate hazard, or warning, is symbolized by a diamond shape. Caution or low hazard, is the familiar triangle or yield sign shape.

The kind of hazard is shown with four symbols. For example, a skull and cross bones is for poison. Other symbols indicate the product is corrosive, flammable or explosive. "These warnings can be found on many household products, so should be fairly familiar," notes Malyk.

"The shapes and symbols can be combined to give a more complete picture of how hazardous the product is," she adds.

Another guide to a product's toxicity is called the LD50, or the lethal dose required to cause death in 50 per cent of animal experiments. LD50 numbers are often listed on the product or in the annual **Guide to Crop Protection**, better known as the *Blue Book*.

The lower the LD50, the more toxic the product. There's also a direct link between the LD50 number and the warning shapes." LD50s of less than 500 will have a stop sign shaped warning symbol. Ratings of between 500 and 1,000 will have the diamond shaped warning and anything over 1,000 will have the yield sign.

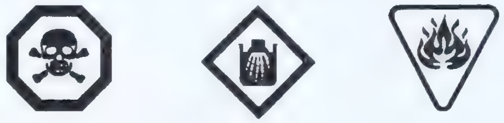
"Working with a less toxic substance means at least minimum protection is required," says Malyk. Minimum protection includes a long-sleeved shirt, full-length trousers, coveralls, unlined nitrile or neoprene gloves, neoprene overboots or long rubber boots and a wide brimmed hard hat with a plastic hat band.

"If the LD50 is less than 1,000 – that means you'll see the diamond shaped warning symbol – consider extra protection," she adds. Extra protection would include goggles or a face shield, ear plugs, respirator, coveralls and a waterproof apron.

"That extra protection is necessary if you're working with a high hazard product, or one with the stop sign shaped warning," Malyk stresses. "Risk also increases when the product is concentrated, so wear extra layers and equipment when handling that type of pesticide."

Blue books are available for $10 plus GST from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices. District offices also have written material and videos about protective clothing.

Contact: Karen Malyk at (403)427-2412



The three signs above combine the degree (shape) and nature (symbol) of hazard. From left to right are: danger-posion, warning-corrosive and caution-flammable

Breaking the fabric cap habit

Fabric baseball caps are coming off and more farmers are wearing hard hats when working with pesticides says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialist.

"It's been a tough sell, but farmers are getting the message they should wear a hard hat, instead of a fabric cap, when they're handling pesticides," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate.

Only three per cent of farmers in a 1991 random survey wore hard hats. Training courses and other awareness methods have increased those numbers. "How much, we're not sure, but there's definitely been a change," she adds. "The fabric baseball style cap is a habit and a hard to break one, but more farmers should consider for both pesticide handling and sun safety."

A fabric cap can absorb pesticide spray and dust, then is a continual source of contamination as long the farmer wears it. Because the head area has one of the highest chemical absorption rates, the potential for pesticide poisoning is greatly increased by the constant exposure.

Hard hats are recommended instead, because they both deflect the spray and dust away from the head, and they are also easier to decontaminate.

Using the same fabric cap over and over again isn't a good strategy. "A pesticide course participant a couple of years ago said he kept the same baseball cap to wear only during the pesticide application season. While he wasn't contaminating all his caps, he still was putting himself at risk from recontamination," notes Malyk.

Contact: Karen Malyk
(403)427-2412

Use the pesticide container collection program

Clean means green is the theme of the 1996 Crop Protection Institute of Canada (CPI) campaign to remind farmers to safely dispose of their used pesticide containers.

The CPI container management program operates in nine provinces. Nationally, container collection increased by over 20 per cent last year. Over 900,000 pesticide containers were collected from municipally operated sites in Alberta in 1995.

While those numbers are encouraging, there's still more to be done. As with other awareness campaigns, the 1996 version will emphasize both using the disposal sites and rinsing the containers. The ultimate goal is to have an environment free of empty pesticide containers by providing municipalities with a safe, systematic way to manage and recycle the materials.

"We're a leader in the program," says Dave Pledger of Alberta Environmental Protection's pesticide management branch. "Albertans initiated the first pesticide container collection program in Canada sixteen years ago."

Alberta farmers can dispose of their used pesticide containers in one of 99 municipal sites across the province. Pledger stresses containers should only be deposited at these designated sites.

While pesticide users have used the disposal/collection sites, another part of the safety equation still needs work – triple or pressure rinsing containers. Two recent surveys point to that fact.

A CPI sponsored survey found that 60 per cent of the farmers who used the collection sites rinsed the containers before disposal. This compares with an Alberta Environmental Protection survey of collection sites where 72 per cent of containers were rinsed.

"Rinsing containers is a critical safety step," says Pledger. Rinsed containers pose less risk for the collection crews, cost less to dispose of, increase reliable recycling options and cause less concern about container site liability.

Approved municipal pesticide container collection sites are listed in the 1996 edition of Alberta Agriculture's annual **Guide to Crop Protection** or *Blue Book*. Site locations and operating hours are also available by calling the Action on Waste Information Line toll-free at 1-800-463-6326.

For information about a collection site in your area, contact your local agricultural fieldman or any office of the pesticide management branch.

Contact: Dave Pledger
(403)297-8262

Asian export seminar and buyers mission April 22-24

Food and beverage processors can learn about promising Asian markets at an export marketing seminar and buyers mission April 22 through 24 in Calgary.

"It's a first time event," says Doug McMullen of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's marketing services division. The *Asia Export Marketing Seminar and Buyers Mission* will follow *Grocery Showcase West*. The latter is an annual western region trade show of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers.

"Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about markets in Taiwan, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong as well as meet buyers from those countries," he adds.

The program starts with a spotlight on successful Canadian exporters on April 22. The dinner keynote speaker is David Morgan, export manager for McCain Foods (Japan) Ltd. Morgan has been in charge of the company's Japanese accounts for more than 20 years.

Cont'd on page 4

Marketing is the focus of the second day, April 23. Sessions are organized by country and speakers represent some of the largest retail, import/distribution and food service companies.

Asian buyers will meet one-on-one with seminar participants during the final day of the seminar. "For participants, it's a chance to promote their products and also get feedback from the buyers," says McMullen.

"There's a space on the registration form to list, in your priority order, the countries you're interested in exporting to," he notes.

Complete registration is $215 (includes GST). There's also the option of just attending the April 22 dinner at a cost of $45.

For more information about the seminar and buyers mission, contact Melody Pashko with the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) at (403)444-2272, or McMullen at (403)427-4241. Registration forms are available by calling either number. The *Asia Export Seminar and Buyers Mission* is a joint project of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, other provincial governments, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, food processor associations across Western Canada and Food Beverage Canada, in conjunction with the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers.

Contact: Doug McMullen
(403)427-4241

Competition good medicine for soil

Southeastern Alberta farmers answered the challenge of who could do the best job of preventing soil erosion by using good summerfallow methods.

The Municipal District of Cypress held a competition to promote environmentally sustainable agriculture for the first time in 1995 and is repeating it in 1996. The 1996 contest was recently (March 15 through 17) promoted at Medicine Hat's agricultural trade show *Agventure*. Farmers can enter one of two categories – reduced tillage or zero tillage.

"We are pleased to sponsor this type of competition because it promotes soil conservation," says Floyd Haas, chair of the municipality's agricultural service board. "It is important that we take care of our soil so that it can continue to grow our food now and in the future."

"Summerfallowing is needed in our area because the low annual rainfall we receive usually doesn't provide enough moisture to grow a crop every year," explains the municipality's agricultural fieldman Doug Henderson.

Summerfallow, or keeping the land free of weeds and volunteer crop for a growing season, ideally saves moisture for the following year's crop. However, how the weeds are controlled can affect top soil. For example, repeated tillage operations that result in a "black" summerfallow field also make the top soil vulnerable to erosion.

"It's a reality here," says Don McLennan, local Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) soil conservationist, of summerfallow. "So we need to accept it and find ways to maintain crop residue at the same time."

The contest was a tangible way of rewarding farmers for good soil conservation practices. Each winner received $200, a framed limited edition print from Ducks Unlimited and free use of the municipality's no-till drill to seed 40 acres the next spring. The 1995 winners were Stan Schuler of Hilda, Vern Pancoast of Redcliff, Neal Lust of Dunmore and Norman Freimark of Walsh.

Henderson and McLennan judged the fields along with Jim Zeller, a Irvine area farmer. Their work included a spring inspection followed by comparing weed kill, the amount of residue – straw and stubble – left on the soil in the fall. They also considered record keeping and other soil saving practices such as field shelterbelts.

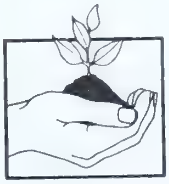
"We noticed the number of times a field was cultivated, or the number of tillage passages really affected the amount of straw and stubble left covering the soil," says McLennan.

Research has shown that a minimum of 30 per cent of soil must be covered by residues to prevent erosion. "Fields where no herbicides were used and needed five tillages passes to control weeds had only 10 to 25 per cent residue cover," he notes.

When some of the tillage passes were replaced by herbicide application, crop residues increased. "For example, fields that were sprayed once only needed cultivating twice and ended the year with 45 per cent cover. As an added bonus, that extra cover is better bird habitat," he adds.

Zero-tillage fields are generally well-protected because the stubble remains anchored and standing. And, if straw is well-spread by the combine, these summerfallow fields can be seeded the next spring without any cultivation.

Contact: Doug Henderson Don McLennan
(403)526-2888 (403)526-2429



National Soil
Conservation
Week April 15 - 21
1996

Composting goes bigger than the backyard

Worms do it. Gardeners do it. So it only seems to make sense that farms and municipalities join the composting wave.

In Alberta, large composting projects are becoming more common. Earlier this year, the City of Edmonton and TransAlta Utilities signed an agreement that will see the city's organic waste be composted in a multi-million dollar development by the utility company. While the benefits compost can add to the soil aren't debatable, the best large-scale composting methods are still being studied.

Last spring Olds College officially opened its Composting Technology Centre. Its one of two such facilities of its kind in North America and serves as a centre for research, demonstration and training.

Tom Clark, the centre's manager, says composting has environmental, economic and social advantages. Alberta's waste is over 70 per cent organic material. Composting is an alternative to landfills and other traditional waste handling that offers the benefit of improving land. The by-product, compost, can be used in agriculture, horticulture and commercial forestry.

Or, as Clark puts it, "Depending on the level of technology utilized with centralized composting, you are manufacturing a resource that has value as a soil amendment as opposed to burying the problem. Compost is providing an alternative waste management practice that affords a win/win situation."

For agriculture, composting practices have proven an effective way to cut manure handling costs. The composting process stabilizes the organic wastes and converts the nutrients into more useful forms than when manure is applied directly on land. Research is emphasizing year-round manure composting. For example, the University of Alberta is currently involved in a cold climate composting project.

"The preferred method of composting involves high temperatures. We know that in cold climates, the desired temperatures of between 50 and 70°C can be maintained in outdoor facilities if piles or windows are big enough," explains Jerry Leonard, professor of bioresource engineering at University of Alberta.

"Part of our research is aimed at understanding the relationships between pile size, compost activity and heat flows in cold conditions," he adds.

Leonard says the project has had success in developing laboratory-scale composting systems to model cold climate proceses.

The other part of the research is investigating the effects of applying the composted manure during cold. "Compost could have an advantage over directly applied manure if, unlike manure, it could be applied to frozen ground with minimal risk of water pollution when it thaws," he says.

Agriculture is only one of the industries that Clark and the Olds centre is working with. One of its goals is to help strengthen environmental sustainability in Alberta. The strategies are many, and start with awareness and education including an annual composting conference. This is the societal aspect of composting, one that starts at people's home and workplaces.

Contact: *Tom Clark* *Dr. Jerry Leonard*
(403)556-4644 *(403)492-0107*

NATIONAL SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK APRIL 15 - 21 1996

Agri-News briefs

2nd annual Wild Rose Classic Bison Show and Sale March 27-30

The second annual *Wild Rose Classic Bison Show and Sale* returns to Edmonton Northland's *Farm and Ranch Show* March 27 through 30. Bison can be viewed both Thursday and Friday, with the sale following on Friday afternoon. There will also be a bison display daily at the Ed Tel Plaza starting at 8 a.m. For more information about the show and sale, contact Ken Olson in Fort Assinboine at (403)584-2482.

Out-of-season goat breeding seminar

The Alberta Goat Breeders Association is holding an out-of-season goat breeding seminar in Innisfail on April 20. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Lesley Jackson in Calmar at (403)985-3863.

National Library of Canada
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Plant tissue culture workshop April 17-19

A three-day course in Edmonton will emphasize laboratory training for handling tissue culture in a greenhouse. The plant tissue culture workshop runs April 17 through 19 at the Crop Diversification Centre North. It will cover the basic tissue culture techniques used in micropropagation of seed potato, fruit crops, landscape plant material and other selected species. Registration is $267.50 (includes GST). The registration deadline is April 4. Contact Kris Pruski at (403)422-1789 for more information.

Bison Association launches 1-800 number

Information about Alberta's bison industry is a toll-free call away at 1-800-683-6747. The Southern Alberta Bison Association (SABA) now has a 1-800 number for Alberta. "We see this number as just one way of information both the rural and urban community about bison," says Phil Staden, SABA vice-president. No longer on the endangered species list, bison are being raised by many Albertans for their meat. An estimated 250 producers have 15,000 head of bison as breeding stock and for the speciality meat market. Over half of all bison in Canada are in Alberta. Production is steadily increasing by about 25 per cent annually, says Staden, making it accessible to Alberta consumers at restaurants, butcher shops and other locations. Alberta producers sell nearly one million pounds of bison meat annually. SABA was established in 1991 and has a membership of 135.

30th Farm and Ranch Show March 27-30

Western Canada's longest continuously running agricultural show returns to Edmonton Northlands for its 30th season March 27 through 30. *Northlands Farm and Ranch Show* includes displays and exhibits of agricultural products and services, livestock shows and sales, a pedigreed seed show, Cody Snyder's World Champion Bull Bustin' and some new features. One of those is a new product showcase. Returning features also include the country lifestyle stage, cutting horse and team penning competitions, an antique and collector farm toys show, make it and take it craft workshops and other family activities. An associated event is an all breeds bull sale March 28 at the Northlands Sportex. All other events are in and around the AgriCom.

Super Horse Weekend at Lakeland College April 18-20

Lakeland College will host the premiere of a Western Canadian first starting April 18 at its Vermilion campus. The *Super Horse Event* kicks off with an evening of the Western horse on April 18, is followed by a super horse competition on April 19 and wraps up with a supreme performing horse sale on April 20. The event allows buyers to see horses in action before the sale. One of the features of the three-day event is the $10,000 Lakeland College Super Horse Stakes. This new concept in equine marketing is a competition open to all previously-sold student-trained Lakeland College geldings. It's designed to show the versatility and ability of these performance horses. Another competition highlights the 1996 sale horses in everyday ranch activities such as trailering, roping and reining. This Lakeland Supreme Ranch Gelding Competition will be held immediately before the sale on April 20. The sale is in co-operation with the Canadian Supreme Futurity Committee and will feature Canadian Supreme nominated yearlings, two and three-year old prospects, and geldings, along with geldings from Lakeland College's renowned Western Horsemanship program. For more information, contact Gary Cooper at (403)853-8587 or the college's communications office at (403)853-8528.

Olds College open house March 30

Sow the seeds of education is the theme for Olds College's annual open house March 30. Activities run between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Among the showcase areas are the newly introduced applied degree in horticulture technology, the Composting Technology Centre, agricultural mechanics' John Deere Ag Tech program and the college's newest Internet initiative *Rural Living Forum*. There are also sales and specials at the meat lab, the College Bookstore, Floral Impressions Shop, library and greenhouse. Garden shuttles will take you on a tour of the facilities. For more information, contact Shelly Brolsma at (403)556-4611.

AGRI-NEWS

April 1, 1996

CANADIANA

MAY 28 1996

Act fast if exposed to pesticide

Pesticide poisoning isn't just limited to the most toxic products says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialist.

"Prevention is the basic step in protecting yourself from any pesticide," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate. [See separate article on protective clothing.]

"However, you should also be prepared if an accidental spill or splash occurs," she adds. "Fast first aid can save lives."

Being prepared starts with **always** carrying clean water when working with pesticides. Water can be used to rinse away a small spill.

Second, let someone know where you'll be and what products you're working with. "One farmer told me he always writes down the product information – name and number – and PCP [pest control products] number on a piece of paper and carries it in his top pocket, just in case. It's a good idea," she notes.

Third, if a pesticide touches your skin, remove your clothing immediately and rinse the area with water. "Follow with soap and water as soon as possible," she adds.

Products splashed into the eyes should also be washed with water for a minimum of 15 minutes.

If someone inhales a pesticide, move them to fresh air immediately. If the person isn't breathing, use CPR or artificial respiration.

If someone swallows a product, check the label. "Some products will suggest you induce vomiting, sometimes you shouldn't. Never induce vomiting if the person is unconscious," she warns.

"Whatever the accident, always call a medical doctor or the poison information service immediately," she says. Keep both numbers by your phone. The poison information service number is toll-free at **1-800-332-1414**.

"If you have to call, have the details ready such as the product name and number, how the poisoning occurred, how much product was involved and how long ago the accident happened," adds Malyk.

In 1994-95, approximately 200 cases of pesticide poisoning were reported to the Poison Information Centre. Most cases can be treated at home. However, nearly 40 per cent of the reported cases in 1994-95 required a hospital visit. Intensive care was required in some cases.

A small percentage of the poisoning cases involve children younger than 15 years of age. "Remember to store pesticides out of childrens' reach and, if possible, in a locked area," she advises.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Act fast if exposed to pesticide 1
Layering your way to better protection 2
Limiting exposure protective clothing's aim 2
Sweet peas can be planted in late April 3
Forecasts: Science or groundhogs? 4
Weather forecasts easy to find 4
Global surfers travel to salinity home page 5
EM-38 a revolution in salinity mapping 5
Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

For more information about protective clothing and preventing exposure to pesticides, contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office, or Malyk in Edmonton at (403)427-2412. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Layering your way to better protection

Protecting yourself from exposure to pesticides has one basic rule: Wear protective clothing and equipment to minimize exposure.

"Wearing protective clothing is a farmer's main defense from exposure to pesticides. There are more specific details, but the most important thing is to protect yourself and your family from unnecessary exposure," says Karen Malyk, Alberta Agriculture's protective clothing research associate.

Multiple layers are the style for protective clothing. "We recommend multiple layers as the best way to protect yourself when handling pesticides. The more layers, the more protection you have," she adds.

Basic protective clothing includes a long sleeved shirt, full-length trousers, coveralls, unlined nitrile or neoprene gloves, neoprene overboots or long rubber boots and a wide brimmed hard hat with a plastic hat band.

The first layer is the long-sleeve shirt and full-length pants or jeans. Both limit pesticide exposure to skin. Cover these with cloth or disposable coveralls.

"Some people wear both for extra protection," she adds. "The disposable coverall has an extra benefit with a hood. This protects your head and makes the coveralls fit better." Before buying a disposable coverall, read the label and ask questions to make sure the coverall is recommended for pesticide use.

Gloves should fit properly to allow fine work such as adjusting sprayer nozzles. For added safety, form a cuff on the glove and wear it under the coverall sleeve. This prevents spills and splashes from running down arms. It's also recommended that whoever handles the pesticide clothing before it's washed wear protective gloves.

If protective clothing becomes saturated, don't try to wash it. Dispose in a plastic bag at an approved landfill site.

"Both gloves and disposable coveralls have a limited lifespan. If they rip, get holes or severe pilling, replace them," adds Malyk.

High rubber boots or neoprene over boots are another must. Wear pants outside the boots so a spill doesn't run down the inside of the boot.

A hard hat is the final piece of basic protection. "This keeps spray off your head. But, the most important aspect of the hard hat is that it's easy to clean with soap and water," she says.

Extra protection for handling concentrates and particularly toxic products includes a variety of other safety equipment such as water proof apron, goggles, face shield, ear plugs and respirators.

"Check the pesticide label. It will usually note the recommended protective clothing and equipment," recommends Malyk.

"If you have any questions, Alberta Agriculture has a number of helpful resources including brochures, a video and the annual *Blue Book* guide to crop protection," she adds. For information about those resources, contact your nearest Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Limiting exposure protective clothing's aim

Protective clothing and layers of protective clothing are the most effective ways to guard against the most common way farmers are exposed to pesticides.

"Absorbing pesticides through the skin is the most common type of exposure. Plus, because absorption rates vary depending on the part of the body, protecting those areas becomes even more important," says Karen Malyk, Alberta Agriculture's protective clothing research associate. [See chart.]

Proper protective clothing reduces the amount of exposure. Generally, notes Malyk, the hands are the most exposed part of the body, and the greatest risk of exposure is when handling, mixing and pouring undiluted pesticides.

"This makes gloves one of the basics of protective clothing," she says. Unlined nitrile or neoprene gloves are recommended for both the pesticide user and whoever handles pesticide-soiled clothing. Gloves should also fit properly so the wearer can make fine adjustments such as on a sprayer nozzle.

Additional layers are a way of preventing skin absorption, particularly in sensitive areas such as the forehead, scalp, ear canal and groin.

Wearing impermeable aprons when pouring and mixing concentrated pesticides is recommended to increase protection of the genital area.

"The genital area has an almost 12 times higher absorption rate than the forearm. For that reason, an extra layer of protection is an excellent safety precaution when mixing,

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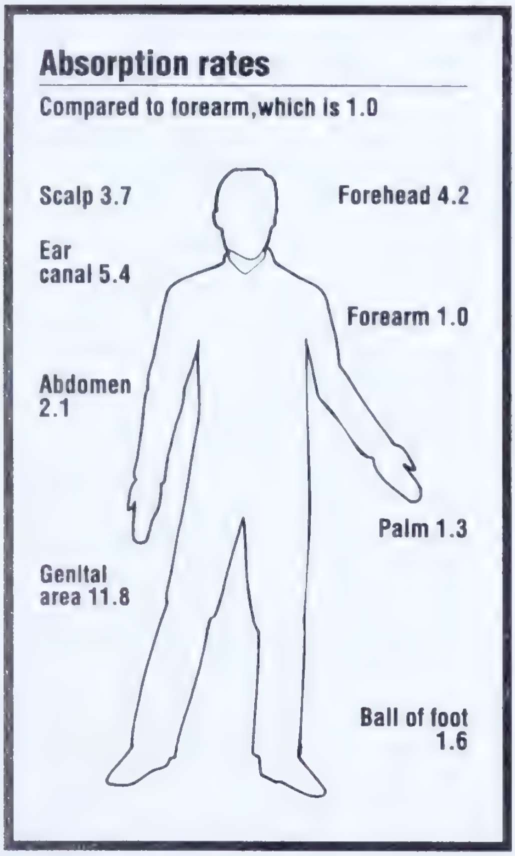

Absorption rates

Compared to forearm, which is 1.0

pouring or reaching into the sprayer tank," she says. The apron can be a third layer over a pair of disposable and cloth coveralls.

Protecting your head is also very important as the scalp, forehead and ear canal absorption rates are from over three to more than five times as much as the forearm rate.

Some type of head protection is strongly recommened. "If possible, choose a hard hat with a plastic band, **not** a fabric cap," stresses Malyk. "Plus, remove any cloth linings from the hard hat."

Once the fabric cap absorbs mists or dusts, it is much more difficult to get clean, compared to a hard hat. On the other hand, a hard hat can be cleaned with soap and water after every use.

Ear plugs and disposable coveralls with hoods are extra protection from exposure.

Malyk also reminds farmers not to wear contact lenses when applying pesticides. "Your contact lenses can also become a source of continual contamination, so don't wear them.

"Your best information sources about what protective clothing you should wear are the product label, the *Blue Book* and Alberta Agriculture brochures," she adds. "You can also talk with protective clothing suppliers such as Aucklands and UFA."

All protective clothing and equipment should be thoroughly washed after every use.

Brochures and a video about protective clothing are available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Sweet peas can be planted in late April

You can get ready for summer by planting sweet peas in mid to late April says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development horticulturist.

"Sweet peas can be planted directly into your garden as soon as the soil can be worked in the spring. That's usually late April," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks.

Sweet peas and summer are synonymous for many Albertans. "They're fragrant and have the added bonus of the more flowers you pick, the more you get," she adds.

Best known as an annual climbing plant, there are also sweet peas to match every planting situation. This includes new varieties that don't need support.

Super Snoop, Little Sweetheart and Snoopeas don't need support and fit well as a mass planting, a border or a flower bed. Bijou is suitable as a border plant, in a window box or in a hanging basket. Giant Spencer or the Cuthbertson's grow over five feet tall and need support.

More traditional varieties need some sort of support, or something to climb on such as wire or string netting with a 2.5 cm grid. New plants have to be trained to the wire by gently weaving them on the netting. Once started, the plants will grow up the support on their own.

"Sweet peas can also be trained on tomato cages," she adds. "Plant the seeds at six inch intervals around the cage. The result is a fountain of flowers in your flower bed or garden."

Barkley also has tips for how to best plant and take care of sweet peas. Soaking the seeds overnight in lukewarm water speeds up germination. Seeds should be planted 2.5 cm deep. For earlier blooming, start plants indoors four to six weeks before the time to set them out.

An open, moisture retaining loam soil enriched with organic matter will help the plants grow more quickly. "If the soil is poor, adding compost or manure to a depth of 45 cm can help," she says.

Another growing tip is that sweet peas require plenty of water to grow. The plants also like full sun, but thrive in cool weather.

"Through the growing season, it's important to keep the pods from forming vines. This signals the plant to begin dying," she notes.

Aphids, slugs and powdery mildew are possible pests. "All are easily remedied," she adds.

Sweet peas are native to the island of Sicily and were first described by a monk in 1695. They were first cultivated in North American in the U.S. in 1750. "Much improvement has been done to the plant since its humble beginnings, for example genetically building heat resistance in the plant," she notes.

For more information, call Barkley in Brooks at (403)362-3391. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-3391

Forecasts: Science or groundhogs?

by Peter Dzikowski, Weather Resource Specialist
Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development

Every farmer is interested in what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, and next season. This is especially true for weather conditions.

But how do we judge if we can rely on the *prediction*? Anyone can make a prediction, but how do we decide if it is reliable? Is it a wild guess? Is there a reason why it should work? Is there a record of success?

Forecasts, of any sort, are based on knowledge gained from observations and an understanding of how things work. It doesn't matter whether you are forecasting who will win the Stanley Cup or next summer's weather, the fundamentals are still the same. The more you know, the more likely the prediction will be right.

Consider the well-known groundhog. There are observations, but there is no understanding of why the shadow being seen has anything to do with how long winter lasts. It's like putting an engine together, you must have all the pieces in place for it to work. The same is true of forecasts.

Weather forecasts are based on observations of current conditions around the world, combined with an understanding of how the atmosphere works and used to predict the weather for up to five days ahead. The results are pretty good and improving. Weather forecasts for the next day are generally about 80 per cent correct, dropping off to about 60 per cent correct for five days ahead.

Forecasts for conditions a month or several months into the future require different techniques. They are still based on observations, but the understanding of how things will work out isn't as clear and the reliability and success isn't as good.

Think of hockey, no one tries to predict the exact series of games a team will win in a season. At best you might try get the final standing or whether they make a playoff spot. The same is true for seasonal forecasts, don't expect details, but instead a general indication of conditions. Seasonal forecasts are usually presented as departures from long term average conditions, usually called normals.

While the skill for monthly and seasonal forecasts isn't all that good yet, it is good enough to use cautiously and is based on all the right pieces of information. Skill and reliability will improve with more observations and a better understanding of how the global climate system works.

Weather forecasts easy to find

There are many different forecast products prepared to meet different needs in society. There are aviation forecasts for the airline industry, marine forecasts for fisherman, the public forecast for general use, and a farm (or rural) forecast geared to the needs of agriculture.

"The different sources of forecast information carry different forecasts depending on who they view as their audience. Most broadcast media, radio and television, carry the public forecast," explains Peter Dzikowski of Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development's conservation and development branch.

Who forecasts and how

Environment Canada is responsible for preparing and issuing weather advisories and warnings to ensure the safety of the general public and to minimize the loss of property to weather hazards. There is a sophisticated communication system in place to collect, transmit and analyze weather observations taken across Canada and the world.

The information is gathered hourly and observations recorded every six hours are combined with detailed measurements of the profile of the atmosphere from the surface to about a 20 km altitude.

Then the information is analyzed by the most powerful supercomputers in the world to estimate how the atmosphere will behave over the next several days. The result is a wide range of maps and information. Skilled meteorologists use them to prepare forecasts for the designated forecast areas and major urban centres.

The ag forecast

The agricultural forecast is a special product geared to meet the needs of the agricultural industry. "It contains the same information as the public forecast," notes Dzikowski, "but it has additional information including the drying index, rainfall amounts, wind speed, wind direction and relative humidity." Forecast information is updated four times a day.

Weather forecasts are available from many sources: newspapers, radio, television, phone, Weatheradio Canada and

Cont'd on page 5

the Internet. They are distributed electronically to radio, television and newspapers. Environment Canada relies on the private and public print and broadcast media to disseminate weather advisories, warnings and forecasts.

Weatheradio

Environment Canada operates a dedicated VHF-FM radio broadcast system called Weatheradio Canada, which operates on three frequencies (162.400, 162.475 and 162.55 mega hertz). There are 16 transmitters in Alberta broadcasting round the clock weather forecast information. The agricultural forecast information is available on Weatheradio Canada.

Farm Weather Line

The Farm Weather Line Program, a co-operative effort between Environment Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, provides farmers with telephone access to up-to-date agricultural weather forecasts. Forecasts are available from seven lines. Long distance toll charges apply. The phone numbers are 328-RAIN (328-7246) in Lethbridge, 526-6224 in Medicine Hat, 295-1003 in Calgary, 342-7322 in Red Deer, 578-3677 (57TEMPS) in Coronation, 468-9196 in Edmonton and 539-7654 in Grande Prairie.

Weather on Internet

Weather and climate products on the Internet are increasing every day. Some of the products now available are current conditions, public weather forecasts and long range forecasts. Start with the department's *Ropin' the Web* home page at: http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca

For further information, contact Dzikowski at (403) 422-4385 toll-free by dialing 310-0000 or at his Internet e-mail address, dzikows@agric.gov.ab.ca

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Global surfers travel to salinity home page

In a recent four week period over 700 Internet surfers travelled to a unique salinity Internet home page created by an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialist.

While most of the surfers were from Canada and the U.S., there was also active interest from Australia and Japan as well as browsers from such diverse locations as Sweden, Turkey, Israel and Trinidad and Tobago. The home page's address is : **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/soil/salinity/**.

The home page's developer, Jan Kwiatkowski, isn't certain if the interest is by accident or design, but has noticed the attention the salinity home page has generated. "We did think one of the advantages of the Internet site would be to open up new opportunities to share Alberta salinity information with researchers around the world," says the agrologist with the conservation and development branch.

This salinity home page provides access to information on the salinity mapping procedure, salinity types and control methods. The WWW site includes illustrations of salinity mechanisms, photographs of saline seeps and a sample (one township) of a municipal salinity map.

However, much of the information is very specific to Alberta. Data includes municipal soil salinity mapping the department's conservation and development branch started in 1993. To date, five municipalities have been mapped and more are in the process. These maps show salinity location, extent and cause.

"The cause determines the control method, so with this information municipalities and other agencies can target salinity control programs," notes Don Wentz, a department soil salinity specialist.

"In particular, the salinity home page offers a fast and easy way to help municipal staff and producers recognize and select control methods for various types of salinity," notes Wentz. An important element of salinity control is understanding the way salinity occurs in the landscape.

Users can view the information and print all or selected pages. Users can also download the information for use in a number of projects.

Contact:	*Jan Kwiatkowski*	*Don Wentz*
	(403)422-6530	*(403)381-5862*

NATIONAL SOIL
CONSERVATION
WEEK APRIL 15 - 21

EM-38 a revolution in salinity mapping

Field scale soil salinity mapping used to be a labor intensive, time consuming process. An Alberta Agriculture conservation and development branch research team has changed it into a high-tech operation.

The base of their system is an electrical conductivity meter called an EM-38. Attached is a lap-top computer system that can read the meter's data and make a field map. Because the meter is sensitive to metals, it's mounted on a plastic sled made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe. The sled is pulled by an all-terrain vehicle.

Cont'd on page 6

"In the past, putting together field scale salinity started with sampling or drilling soil, followed by analysis in a lab and finally manually preparing maps," says salinity specialist Don Wentz.

It took three or more days to map a 160-acre quarter section. Compare that to about four hours with the EM-38 system, and the difference is efficiency.

"With this system you can map a relatively large area in a short time frame. The operation is all in one pass instead of taking three steps and much more time and labor," he adds.

Besides speed, the automated mapping system has other benefits such as accuracy. "Not only do we get a better inventory of where soil salinity problems are, the farmers involved get an accurate picture of where their saline seeps are located," he explains. Combining the system's three-dimensional maps with air photos makes seeps and fringe areas very clear.

This technology has made salinity mapping both easier and quicker. "Municipalities have gotten involved, too. The data has been used in many ways, including a salinity home page on the Internet," adds Wentz. [See separate story on the salinity home page.]

Other research team members were Wentz's colleagues Curt Livergood, a soil salinity technologist, and Bill Read, a soil and water technologist. Project partners included the University of Alberta, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) and some private sector companies.

Contact: *Don Wentz*
(403)381-5862

Agri-News briefs

Hardwood processing workshop in Fairview

Fairview College is hosting a *Hardwood Processing Workshop* May 13 through 15. The workshop is designed for anyone interested in processing aspen, black poplar and birch into marketable and higher-value products. Participants will receive a manual. Workshop sessions will cover sawing, drying and grading hardwoods; developing a business plan for hardwood sawmills; and, marketing hardwoods and hardwood products. There will also be demonstrations of high-value products such as mouldings, picture frames, joinery stock and furniture components. Registration is $200 per person. For more information, contact Bill DeWeerdt or Darlene Mievre at Fairview College at (403)835-6682.

Asian export marketing and buyers seminar April 22-24

Food and beverage processors can learn about promising Asian markets at an export marketing seminar and buyers mission April 22 through 24 in Calgary. The *Asia Export Marketing Seminar and Buyers Mission* will follow *Grocery Showcase West*. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about markets in Taiwan, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong as well as meet buyers from those countries. The program starts with a spotlight on successful Canadian exporters at a dinner on April 22. Marketing is the focus of the second day, April 23. Sessions are organized by country and speakers represent some of the largest retail, import/distribution and food service companies. Asian buyers will meet one-on-one with seminar participants during the final day of the seminar. For more information about the seminar and buyers mission, contact Melody Pashko with the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) at (403)444-2272, or Doug McMullen at (403)427-4241.

Clipping, fitting and showing clinic at Lakeland College

Participants can bring their own cattle, clippers and grooming equipment to a hands-on advanced clipping, fitting and showing clinic at Lakeland College in Vermilion on April 13. This clinic requires a good understanding of all three skills. The morning session will focus on clipping. The afternoon sessions will cover hands-on fitting and showing. Enrolment is limited. For more information, contact Jacquie Burris at (403)853-8623. To register, call (403)853-8444 or 1-800-661-6490.

Compost-in-a-Crate unveiled

An educational project about organic waste management practices was recently unveiled at Olds College. *Compost-in-a-Crate* was developed to show municipalities, schools and industries ways to incorporate and encourage organic waste management practices in their areas. Alberta's Lieutenant Governor Gordon Towers did the official unveiling at the college's recent composting conference. The college is home to a Composting Technology Centre, an educational, research and demonstration facility. For more information about the college's composting initiatives, contact Tom Clark at (403)556-4644.

Stock dog clinic in late April

The techniques for training your dog to handle stock are the subject of a three-day stock dog clinic at Lakeland College in Vermilion April 26 through 28. The course instructor is 1987 world champion Elvin Kopp. Both beginning and advanced training techniques will be included in the clinic. Sessions on obedience and working stock will be covered. For more information, contact Jacquie Burris at (403)853-8623. To register, call (403)853-8444 or 1-800-661-6490.

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AGRI-NEWS

April 8, 1996

CANADIANA

MAY 28 1996

How you wash makes a difference

How you wash pesticide contaminated clothing depends on what type of pesticide was being used says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialist.

"There are some basic rules to follow such as using hot water, a heavy duty detergent and washing daily, but some specifics can help reduce pesticide residues even more," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate.

Some pesticides can be removed in one wash. Some require two washings or a soak to remove the greatest amount of pesticide residue. [See chart.]

Washing Procedures for Various Pesticides

Product	Recommended method
2,4-D (amine)	One wash
2,4-D (ester)	Limolene (degreaser), one wash
Avadex	Spray'n'Wash, one wash
Decis	Bleach soak, one wash
Lorsban(chlorpyrifos)	Bleach soak, one wash
Pyrinex (clorphyrifos)	Bleach soak, one wash
Malathion (diluted)	Two washes
Malathion(concentrated)	**Discard**
Sulfonylurea products: Ally, Amber, Crossfire, Express, Muster	Ammonia soak, one wash *Don't mix ammonia with bleach.*

"Using a stain remover soak on Avadex contaminated clothing will reduce residues to 19 per cent," she notes.

For other pesticides, a three-hour bleak soak in warm water leaves a minimal residue.

Pesticide contaminated clothing should be washed daily. This also applies to equipment. If the clothing is saturated, then dispose of it, don't wash it.

"Your protective clothing should be washed separate from your regular family wash," she adds. "and only wash one or two items in each load."

After washing the clothing, run the empty washer through a full cycle with hot water and detergent.

As well, line drying protective clothing is recommended over a dryer. "Residues will break down even more outside in the sun and wind. On the other hand, those residues could contaminate your dryer," she notes.

Brochures and a video about protective clothing are available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices. The annual *Blue Book* [**Guide to Crop Protection with Chemicals**] also has a complete section on protective clothing and preventing exposure to pesticides.

Contact: Karen Malyk
(403)427-2412

This Week

How you wash makes a difference 1

Single desk selling report ids missed market opportunities 2

A sign for the times 2

Walking through the conservation story 3

Energy, soil and change connects with science curriculum 3

Winter injury cause of brown needles 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Single desk selling report i.d.s missed market opportunities

A report on single desk selling, commissioned by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, says the method imposes extra costs at the farm gate, and this reinforces the need for a more open marketing system.

"If there is a premium obtained by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) in grain sales, then it is not finding its way to farmers. What happens to the premiums between the ports and the farm gate?" asks the department's minister Walter Paszkowski.

A comparison of U.S.-Canadian farm gate returns to wheat and barley shows no evidence of any CWB price premiums, and even if the CWB could draw out a price premium, the additional costs of the single desk system wouldn't be offset. Measurable costs of the single desk to farmers exist, they vary and they are over $20 per tonne for both wheat and barley. However, the costs for barley are much higher. These estimates don't even include the additional cost to taxpayers of another $5 to $9 per tonne.

These are among the findings of a report on the economics of single desk selling of Western Canadian grains. In November 1995, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development commissioned professors Colin Carter of Davis, California and Al Loyns from Red River Valley, Manitoba to conduct the study.

The study's purpose was to determine whether or not the existing single desk wheat marketing system is the best alternative from a Canadian producer's standpoint. The study also explores the economic benefits and costs of the single desk status of the CWB.

Carter and Loyns found little attention has been paid to the fact that there is no buying competition at the farm gate. They also found the CWB has given away substantial quantities of protein by delivering a higher quality of wheat than customers paid for.

About 75 per cent of the world demand is for medium quality wheat, and that market is growing, especially in Asia. Carter and Loyns believe Canada has missed market opportunities and foregone revenue by focusing on high quality wheats and not adequately diversifying into medium and lower quality wheats.

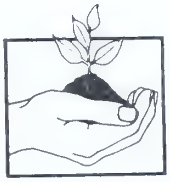
"This missed opportunity to market medium quality wheat is just one of the many significant weaknesses Carter and Loyns have identified in their examination of the monopoly on grain marketing that exists in Canada," says Paszkowski. "Many other issues must be looked at further, and the agriculture industry needs to maintain a proactive approach toward convincing the federal government to overhaul the CWB and other institutional constraints on farmers and sellers of wheat and barley."

The Economics of Single Desk Selling of Western Canadian Grain can be found on the Internet at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/market/sngldesk.html**. A hard copy of the report is available from the department's policy secretariat by calling (403)427-2417.

Contact: Gordon Herrington
(403)422-1823

A sign for the times

Please help us preserve this sensitive parkland area by keeping all vehicles on existing roads is the message on signs throughout Rumsey Parkland.



NATIONAL SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK APRIL 15 - 21 1996

There are two elements of co-operation to the signs. One is the co-operation asked of people using the sensitive area. The second is the co-operative effort among government and industry that put up the signs in the largest single block of native aspen parkland in the world.

The 70-section Rumsey Block is public land located about 40 km north of Drumheller, or about 80 km southeast of Red Deer. About 57 sections of the block is known as the Rumsey Parkland and the remaining 13 are designated as an ecological reserve. The area is managed by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's public lands branch.

Long recognized for its unique natural qualities of size, vegetation and topography, the area has an integrated management plan prepared by government specialists along with area users such as oil companies, grazing associations and individual ranchers.

"Management is based on maintaining the area in as natural a condition as possible while utilizing it for grazing, oil and gas production and undeveloped recreation," says Barry Cole, public lands officer in Red Deer.

One of the preservation strategies keys on managing access to the area to minimize the effects on landscape and natural resources. Last summer, signs were built and set up at key entrances and other locations in the parkland area.

The signs were a joint venture. "This project," says Cole, "shows how a number of stakeholders whose resource interests may vary, can come together and focus on a common goal for the benefit of a unique and special area."

Cole and Jim Allen, fish and wildlife technician with Alberta Environmental Protection in Drumheller, came up with the sign concept and text. Jan Patterson, services co-ordinator for

Cont'd on page 3

the public lands branch, oversaw getting the materials, painting the signs and co-ordinating funding.

That funding included the *Buck for Wildlife* program as well as contributions from companies active in the area – Poco Petroleum Ltd., Renaissance Energy Ltd. and Ulster Petroleum Ltd. Also instrumental in supporting preserving and protecting the Rumsey Parkland are individual lease holders Tom Usher and Wilber Steward along with Jake's Butte and Rowley Grazing Associations.

All the participants are acknowledged on the lower portion of the signs.

Contact: *Barry Cole* *Jan Patterson*
(403)340-5451 *(403)427-4684*

Walking through the conservation story

Imagine a farm tour where the focus isn't livestock or high technology equipment, instead the focus is on conservation. That's what's in store if you visit the Parkland Conservation Demonstration Farm east of Edmonton starting later this spring.

Two interpretative trials will take visitors through a farm-focused or a wildlife-focused tour around the 600-acre farm near Mundare on the Yellowhead Highway. It's about 90 km east of Edmonton and 20 km west of Vegreville.

"Even though the trail systems will each have a different focus, they aren't restricted to agriculture in one and the parkland ecosystem in the other," explains Tamara Lewis of Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch.

"One of the goals of the demonstration farm is to show sustainable farming and how the interests of agriculture and wildlife can be very successfully integrated," she adds.

For example, one stop on the farm tour explains – and shows – permanent cover. Wildlife habitat agreements between a farmer and wildlife organization keep cover on the field year round. This permanent cover provides habitat for waterfowl, songbirds and other wildlife species such as white-tail deer and weasels. After nesting season, cattle can be pastured. Light grazing revitalizes the grasses so wildlife cover can be maintained.

"Another stop shows how wildlife can be nurtured on farms, and also points out that wildlife is an indicator of a healthy landscape," adds Lewis.

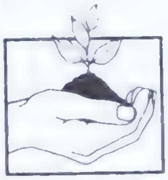
The second trail system is a spotlight on aspen parkland. "As the first sign will explain, aspen parkland is nature with an identity crisis," she says. "It's where prairie meets forest and mix. The variety of wildlife is diverse, and might even surprise visitors."

Who it might surprise includes farmers, school children and tourists. "This is an agricultural research facility, but it's also been set aside so people can appreciate the unique characteristics of aspen parkland," says Lewis. "It can be a learning experience for anyone and everyone."

The Mundare conservation demonstration farm is part of the Parkland Agriculture Research Initiative (PARI). The demonstration farm is host to a number of research projects including crop variety trials, snow fencing, global position systems and tillage trials.

For more information about the Parkland Conservation Farm or the trail system, contact Lewis in Edmonton at (403)422-4385 or the farm manager Dean Kupchenko at (403)632-2244.

Contact: *Tamara Lewis* *Dean Kupchenko*
(403)422-4385 *(403)632-2244*



National Soil
Conservation
Week April 15 - 21
1996

Energy, soil and change connects with science curriculum

Natural resource conservation and sustainable development can be connected to senior high science curricula through a new seven-lesson series.

Managing Energy and Change is one of the newest resources available through Alberta's Agriculture in the Classroom program. "It was designed to fit into science, chemistry and biology courses," says Barb Shackel-Hardman, conservation awareness specialist with Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch.

"The lesson materials complements the content of the courses by dealing with technological and societal issues related to science," she adds.

For example, lesson four examines composting as a method for soil conservation. In it, students learn about worm composting to municipal composting systems. They'll also discover how composting manages waste, conserves energy and conditions the soil. This lesson is related to unit work in Science 20 and 30.

The first lesson of the series starts with an exploration of how energy is used to form soil. The living soil is the focus of lesson two. Lesson three moves into garden chemistry. Students learn

Cont'd on page 4

about soil nutrients, nutrient exchange, pH and salinity, as well as appropriate uses of the soil resource.

"From there the lessons examine specific conservation issues," notes Shackel-Hardman. Lesson four is about composting. Wildlife conservation practices are the subject of lesson five. Lesson seven is devoted to soil reclamation.

"Lesson six about the human food chain may have the most personal interest for students," she says. "They'll explore how energy from the sun is converted into food, and the best use of energy in food production."

Shackel-Hardman was one of the team members who developed the series. "A number of department specialist from diverse areas, academics and other experts helped to put together the lessons," she notes. As well, the lessons were field tested by teachers in Alberta classrooms.

Funding partners included the Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Centre, the Alberta chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the Environmental Partners Fund, Alberta Environmental Protection, the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA) and both Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch and Agriculture in the Classroom program.

Copies of *Managing Energy and Change* are available free in Alberta from the Agriculture in the Classroom program in Edmonton by writing it at 2nd Floor, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, AB, T6H 5T6, calling (403)427-2171 or faxing (403)438-3362. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

There is a small fee for out-of-province shipments.

Contact: Carolyn King or Tamara Lewis
(403)422-4385

Winter injury cause of brown needles

Even if winter warm spells are few and far between, they can still cause winter injury on evergreen trees says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development horticulturist.

"Winter, particularly in southern Alberta, was bitterly cold," notes Shelley Barkley of the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks. "But the warm conditions that did occur are probably the cause of needles turning brown."

The color varies with the type of tree. Spruce and pine needles turn brown. Cedar leaf scales fade from green to light tan or reddish-brown. Colorado blue spruce can turn a purplish-brown. Branches or branchlets of junipers turn brown or orange.

The needles turn color because they are dry. "Winter drying usually happens in abnormally warm winters because moisture is continuously lost and can't be replaced because the roots are dormant," she explains.

There are other causes. For example, radiation from the sun or reflection from snow and light-colored buildings on sunny warm days can increase leaf temperatures to 20°C more than the air temperature. Moisture in a tree's stems and branches is used up.

Brown needles show up when temperatures warm in the spring. The discoloration can occur on a few branches at the top, on one side or over the entire tree.

"Not only does this winter injury affect how your trees look, it can also affect their growth," she notes. "Severe injury may cause the loss of most needles and the tree can even die.

"To restore your tree's shape and form, you may have to prune," says Barkley, "But, wait until you're sure what is dead and what is going to grow."

To prevent winter browning, Barkley advises watering evergreens well during the spring and summer. "Don't drown them," she adds. Fertilization should be light, if at all. Keep plants pest free.

Root injury can also cause needles to turn brown. Dry soils increase the chance roots will be damaged. Such root injury can occur during winters with little snowfall. "You might not even notice there's a problem until summer when the trees suddenly turn brown and die because they can't get the moisture the top growth demands up from the damaged roots," she says.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Alberta beef is BSE disease-free

Alberta cattle are BSE disease-free and safe assures Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Paszkowski made the statement after the British Secretary of State for Health reported beef infected with BSE, officially known as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, has been associated with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD) in 10 British patients. CJD is a human form of BSE, commonly known as mad cow disease. From 1982 to 1990, Canada imported 175 cattle, primarily beef breeds, from the United Kingdom (UK). In 1990, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada banned imports of British live animals and feed. Meat has never been imported from the UK. Swift action three years ago by federal agriculture inspectors and co-operation by Alberta Agriculture animal health staff, destroyed the only cow with BSE imported into Canada. Furthermore, federal officials ordered all British imports and their offspring, a total of nearly 400 cattle in Canada, destroyed. "It was drastic action by the federal government," says Paszkowski, "but decisive, thorough action is essential to maintaining cattle health. I give credit to the federal government for their swift action in keeping Canada's beef industry and our consumers safe. We must support the scientific evidence, and we must support Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for protecting our citizens and the livestock industry. Alberta has more than five million beef cattle that are completely safe from this dreaded disease. I extend my sympathy to British livestock owners who are faced with this terrible calamity." For more information, contact Dr. Dale Armstrong, chief provincial veterinarian, in Edmonton at (403)427-6406.

AAAS offers scholarship

The Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies is offering two $500 scholarships to students enrolled in an agricultural or a directly related program at an Alberta post-secondary institution. Applicants must be nominated by their local agricultural society and be a community volunteer. Financial need is a consideration in the scholarship award. The scholarship will be paid directly to the educational institution when the student completes the first year of the program. Scholarship information has been mailed to all Alberta agricultural societies. For more information, contact Wendy Pruden in Edmonton at (403)427-2174.

Food Processors Reference Manual available

Practical advice and contact for information about a variety of business topics are offered in the **Alberta Food Processors Reference Manual**. The manual is a joint project of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA). Among the subjects covered are market research, business planning, food safety, packaging and labelling, strategic marketing, distribution, promotion, pricing, support services, manufacturing strategies, business organizations, human resource management, protecting yourself and the consumer, and developing a quality product. Manual are $45 for AFPA members and $65 for non-members. For more information, contact AFPA in Edmonton at (403)444-2272.

Olds College adds four programs

Olds College will be offering four more new diploma and certificate programs to students this fall. They include arboriculture (horticulture major, two-year diploma), garden centre (horticulture major, one-year certificate/two-year diploma), composting technology (one-year certificate/ two-year diploma) and seed and grain technology (second cohort, two-year diploma). Funding for these programs was recently announced by Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development. For more information, contact Dr. Robert Lockwood, Olds College vice-president academic services, in Olds at(403)556-8302.

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CANADIANA

MAY 28 1996

AGRI-NEWS

April 15, 1996

Demand pulls hog prices up

Strong demand for slaughter hogs and pork continued to pull up prices during March says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"Price strength should continue into the second quarter," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch.

A two per cent drop in pork production, compared to year-ago, levels is supporting the price strength. "Those slight reductions alone don't explain prices well-above year-ago levels in the U.S. and the highest Alberta first quarter prices since 1983," he adds.

Gietz points out at least three positive market factors that bode well for the hog market. One is continued keen U.S. packer demand for hogs in the wake of recent investments in the packing industry and overcapacity in some of the key hog markets.

Fast food chains have also played a role in pork market strength. "A surge in demand for pork bellies, was prompted by several fast food chains introducing bacon burgers," notes Gietz. February cold storage stocks of bellies were down 72 per cent from last February.

Finally, packers were gearing up the April 1 end of the snap-back tariff on pork exports to Japan. "This should prompt a surge in pork exports to Japan in the second quarter, but possibly a re-introduction of the tariff by late summer," he says.

Gietz says price prospects are very positive for the second quarter, market highs will come at the same time. "1996 could well be a year in which hog prices peak early – in June – and then lower steadily in the second half of the year," he says.

Gietz forecasts Index-100 Alberta hogs to average $1.75/kg in June, but drop to $1.65 in July. Both predictions are well-above the same time prices of 1995, respectively $1.52 and $1.66.

Contact: *Ron Gietz*
(403)427-5376

Negative for livestock, positive for feedgrain

Feedgrain prices remained strong through March and the outlook is for attractive prices to continue into the new crop year says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"However, producers should be aware that the market is more worrisome than for either wheat or oilseeds," says Al Dooley of the market analysis and statistics branch.

First, one shouldn't underestimate farmers' ability to grow crops," he notes. For example, U.S. corn production in 1995

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Demand pulls hog prices up 1

Negative for livestock, positive for feedgrain 1

Feeder cattle prices dependant on feed market 2

Mustard golden in current market 2

March weather cool 3

Soil Week shorts 3

Alberta Agriculture appointments 5

Briefs 6

Alberta
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dropped 27 per cent in just one year. This year, area is expected to be higher than in the record 1994 season. Record production in that country cannot be discounted.

"We're also likely to see more feed quality wheat grown this season than we have in the past two years. Should this occur in combination with a large coarse grain crop, expect some downward price movement," he adds.

Dooley does expect barley prices to continue a weaker trend over the next couple of months. He expects a price range between $165 and $180 per tonne, basis nearby western barley futures.

"Much depends on the seeding intentions reports and, of course, weather conditions over the next number of weeks," he notes.

In the wheat market, even increased global wheat acreages likely won't increase supplies enough to pressure prices very much. "The bottom line is that the coming crop year continues to look bright for wheat markets," says Dooley.

"The canola situation isn't quite so positive," he adds. "It's hard to be positive given the stocks of old crop that are still around. Canadian exports are behind last year's pace. However, lowered seeding intentions could help. If the market can't attract more acres by increasing new crop bids, it will be interesting to see how available supplies will be rationed among prospective buyers."

Contact: Al Dooley
(403)427-5386

Feeder cattle prices dependent on feed market

More than any other time in recent history, the price outlook for feeder cattle depends on developments in the feedgrain market says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"An upwards-trending feedgrain market will pressure feeder cattle prices still lower, while a weaker feedgrain market will see higher feeder cattle prices," says Ron Gietz of the market analysis and statistics branch.

During March there were some positive developments in local feeder cattle markets. Price ranges have crept upwards, at least in the lighter weight classes, where there is the potential to achieve inexpensive weight gains on grass. Even on the heavy feeder cattle, there were no additional price declines because of seasonal marketing increases. In U.S. cash and futures markets, there was some further downwards pressure, primarily from concerns about still higher corn prices.

"Looking at the brighter side, the sharp decline in feeder cattle prices this spring and the high cost of feedlot rations has improved the prospects of making money grazing cattle this summer," he notes. "The exception is producing bred heifers which is definitely not recommended at this stage of the cattle cycle."

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

Mustard golden in current market

Yellow mustard is the current power in the mustard market says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst.

"At the end of March, yellow prices were a full 10 cents per pound ahead of both oriental and brown prices," says Matthew Machielse, of the market analysis and statistics branch.

"The market is reflecting a 28 cent per pound bid to growers, but it appears the bins are swept clean and producers are pushing the traders to the wall on the sweepings," he adds.

The market picture isn't so rosy for canary seed and lower quality lentils. Canary seed bids have retreated to between low and mid 20 cent per pound levels. "This after flirting with 30 cents over the past month," he notes.

Machielse's situation analysis is that Europeans aren't convinced current supplies warrant these high prices and aren't buying forward in very large quantities. "It is very difficult to assess whether official statistics are accurate and significant unsold stocks remain," he says.

For producers holding canary seed, the narrow spread between new and old crop would justify holding firm on the final 10 or 15 per cent of production. Given the lack of European activity, Machielse advises patience until better indications of remaining stocks and spring needs are available.

Producers are unlikely to see improvements beyond current levels in the lentil market. "I'd advise moving products of lower grades," he says. Prices on Extra 3 Laird lentils have reached 17.5 cents per pound with Estons following at just under 14 cents per pound delivered plant.

On the other hand, producers with premium qualities may try testing the common seed market. There are reports of difficulty in getting quality seed stocks.

"If you're a buyer, test seed stock for both germination and vigor to insure planting quality," he notes.

In the feed pea market, Machielse says a strong spring rally is needed to get the market moving in the right direction. Currently, the Alberta domestic feed pea market is offering a premium to export offers. Export offers have been ranging in the $5.25 to $5.50 per bushel range while local mills have held fairly steady to the $5.75 per bushel level.

However, new crop offers in the feed pea market have thrown off some sparks and deserve attention. "Producers have signed

Cont'd on page 3

contacts at highs of $5.80 per bushel for fall delivery," he notes. "This level is well above the current averages and would be a great place to start pricing 10 to 15 per cent of new crop feed production."

A different strategy is suggested for edible quality peas. "Those producers should steer clear of forward contracting as the upside far outweighs the downside. Crop quality will determine edible grade price levels. Expectations in the U.S. point to declining green pea acreage, but are holding comfortable old crop stocks at the commercial level," he says.

New crop edibles are being offered at $6 per bushel for greens and near $5.80 per bushel on yellow edibles. Western Canadian pea acreage is now expected to decline around 15 per cent from last year.

Dry bean acreages are also expected to fall, and as a result, prices should improve. At the end of March, new crop offers were at 28.5 cents per pound for up to 100 per cent of expected Pinto production in Alberta. One prospective bean class showing good potential is pink varieties, given the declining 1995 U.S. production and lower stock levels. Producers are encouraged to spread the price risk and diversify into more than one bean class. Great Northerns will be one of the few bean acreages to increase and therefore, don't expect spot price levels to continue into new crop.

Contact: Matthew Machielse
(403)422-3099

March weather cool

March was more lion than lamb. Usually the fifth coldest month of the year, March was cool with an average temperature 3.3°C below normal and total precipitation 86 per cent of normal.

"The average monthly temperature for March was -7.5°C, compared to the long term average of -4.2°C," says Peter Dzikowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's weather resource specialist. "Most Alberta locations reported temperatures two to five degrees below normal."

High Level reported the greatest departure from the usual monthly temperature at 4.6°C cooler than normal. The normal temperature for March is -10.5°C.

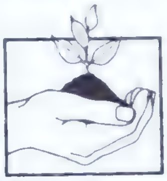
"The month started with cold temperatures for the first two weeks," adds Dzikowski. "Warm Pacific air then returned to tease Albertans with spring like conditions, raising expectations of an early spring. Temperatures then fell to below normal for the rest of the month." March ended with cold temperatures and blowing and drifting snow.

March is usually the third driest month of the year. The near normal precipitation represents only 2.9 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 20.2 mm.

The driest regions in Alberta were the northeast and northwest regions with amounts of five to 22 mm, or 30 to 90 per cent of normal. Most other locations reported near normal precipitation totals, although amounts varied from five to 45 mm, or 30 to 260 per cent of normal.

These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385



NATIONAL SOIL
CONSERVATION
WEEK APRIL 15 - 21
1996

Soil Week Shorts

With 3Rs and a song

Music was one of the ways Kim Denis told people about conservation. The long-time Blindman 4-H Lighthorse Club member was named the 1995 recipient of the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award last summer.

The award recognizes a graduate of the provincial 4-H conservation camp who best spreads the conservation message after taking part in the camp. It's named for the former lieutenant governor and well-known conservationist and was established in 1975.

Denis, a Red Deer College student, says she tried to make her activities follow the 3Rs of reduce, reuse and recycle and applied them at home and school, and with her 4-H club and other community events. For example, her family began reusing wood to build a variety of lawn ornaments. Recyclable items were sorted out of the family's garbage. She and her father car pooled from their home near Lacombe to Red Deer.

Her 4-H club used pop cans as a fund raiser and she spent many Saturday mornings counting cans. At college, she encouraged classmates to use recycling boxes as well as reusing paper themselves.

Her message was also musical. Denis wrote conservation lyrics to familiar tunes and performed them at events such as a Christmas fundraiser.

100,000 club has an exclusive membership

A Saskatchewan equipment manufacturer has a unique way of recognizing the people who buy and use their tillage, seeding and spraying equipment.

Cont'd on page 4

Bourgault Industries' *100,000 Acre Plus Club* was established in late 1993. The more than 140 club members have used the same piece of equipment for more than 100,000 acres.

While the club membership is a testament to the equipment's durability – one club member registered more than 325,000 acres of use – it also serves as a way to promote equipment used in conservation farming practices. For example, air seeding systems that allow one-pass seeding and fertilizing that minimizes soil disturbance.

For more information about the 100,000 Acre Plus Club, call Armand Kraft at (306)275-2300.

Agriculture and wildlife win with Prairie Care

Over 4,300 Alberta producers are part of *Prairie CARE*, a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to improve soil, water and wildlife conservation practices.

Prairie CARE is the land use component of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. To date, it includes more 300,000 acres across the province. Its newest element is the **land use exchange**.

The exchange is a co-operative agreement between a farmer or rancher and the Prairie CARE program with the goal of improving grass conditions and water quality for wildlife habitat and optimum agricultural production.

It works this way. In exchange for improving wetland habitat such as grass cover on their own land, co-operating producers can use a block of tame grass of native range on land purchased or leased by Prairie CARE. As a result, producers get additional hay or pasture land at no cost while helping to rejuvenate wildlife habitat.

This rejuvenation can be accomplished in a number of ways such as retiring an area from production for a few seasons, deferring grazing or delaying hay cuts until after July 15, or developing a planned grazing system. The program offers technical and financial assistance for grazing systems.

The exchange program's field staff from Ducks Unlimited and Alberta Environmental Protection are getting positive reviews from participating land owners. Currently there are over 25 such agreements with dozens more in the planning stage. For more information contact Ken Gurr in Edmonton at (403)422-1040 or e-mail nalberta@compusmart.ab.ca.

Winners circle familiar territory

The Masons of Delia made a second consecutive trip to the winners' circle when the 1996 provincial conservation awards were handed out in February.

This year they were recognized with as the *Conservation Farm Family*. Last year Albert and Barry Mason, accepted the *Conservation Producer Group* for the Delia Conservation 2000 Club that they co-founded.

Respectively, Albert and his wife Emma, and Barry and his wife Dawn, are the third and fourth generations on their family farm. Their conservation practices date back to the early 1960s when they first started using a chaff saver. In the intervening 30 years they've moved to continuous cropping. This choice has stopped their soil from blowing, improved water infiltration and soil tilth, and increased organic matter.

Their conservation farming operation is a showcase for the surrounding area. What's less visible are their meticulous records, careful planning and research.

Contact the Masons at (403)364-2129.

The awards are sponsored by the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), the **Western Producer**, Toronto Dominion Bank, Monsanto Canada and the Canada\Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA).

Kudos for CARA

Although a 1979 birth is recent, the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) is the oldest of the province's applied research organizations. But age can have its rewards such as an early 15th birthday present of the *1996 Conservation Producer Group* award.

CARA operates in a 8,000 square mile, or some 5 million acre, area in semi- arid east central Alberta. Land management and conservation issues are particular concerns where moisture isn't plentiful and problem soils are common.

Currently CARA's five employees handle about 30 research projects annually. The bulk are crop and forage variety trials. But projects have keyed on a wide variety of local concerns such as pasture rejuvenation and problem soils. A specific conservation-related project, stubble height management, started in 1995.

Guided by its board of directors and worked on by its staff led by manager Dianne Westerlund, CARA emphasizes a systems approach. This takes into consideration long-term production, soil problems, economics, wildlife and water quality.

The award also recognized CARA's success in transferring its valuable information and research to area producers.

For more information about CARA contact Westerlund at (403)664-3777.

The conservation group and farm family awards are sponsored by the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), the **Western Producer**, Toronto Dominion Bank, Monsanto Canada and the Canada\Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA).

Cont'd on page 5

Growing more than food

Be prepared for a phrase that you'll be hearing more of: *Growing More than Food, Growing Alberta*.

That's the theme of an extensive agricultural awareness campaign launched last fall in Alberta. It will kick into full gear during National Soil Conservation Week at a special press conference in mid-April.

"Our goal is to spread agriculture's message beyond the producers and the processors," says Barb Shackel-Hardman, a member of *Growing Alberta's* the industry-government steering committee.

"It's not too hard to figure out that at its most basic level agriculture is food production, what many Albertans don't seem to know is that the industry is much, much more," adds the conservation awareness specialist with Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch.

Through co-ordinated messages in a variety of media, Albertans will see and hear messages about the economic impact of the agriculture and food industry, its leading role in the national scene and how producers are taking care of resources such as soil.

Initial funding for the project has come from the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA). "It's seed money to get the program underway and our goal is to have a co-ordinated industry effort take it over," notes Shackel-Hardman.

For more information, contact Shackel-Hardman at (403)422-4385 or Ron Brown at (403)422-3925.

Alberta Agriculture Appointments

To develop a plan or plan a development

Murray Davison is the new rural development specialist in the Valleyview district office. Specializing in business development, he brings a working knowledge of farming and farm machinery business to the Peace River region. Born in the Saskatchewan capital, Regina, Davison grew up on a mixed farming operation in Lancer, northwest of Swift Current. His family also owned and operated a farm machinery dealership in Abbey, Saskatchewan servicing a large agricultural area. After achieving a BA from the University of Saskatchewan in rural and urban development, he accepted a position as community development officer in Eston, Saskatchewan. Strategic planning for the community and working with the development of businesses gave him experience in both small and large projects from shelterbelt planting to feedlot operations development. "I look forward to assisting individuals and groups in the development and planning of their business ventures and ideas to diversify and expand their operations," Davison says. He can be reached in Valleyview at (403)524-3301 or 1-800-449-2105.

Check your pulse and special crops

Terry Buss, crop specialist, joined Alberta Agriculture's Vermilion District office in February. As an information source for producers growing pulse and special crops, Buss is the person with research know-how and answers to your questions. A Manitoban by birth, his background and roots are in mixed farming, beef and field crops with emphasis on pulse and special crops. A bachelor of science in agriculture graduate from the University of Manitoba, Buss brings experience in plant science to the position. Currently completing his masters, he is writing his thesis on plant growth promoting rhizobacteria and nitrogen fixation. "I provide an unbiased third source of information," says Buss. In this role, he will be able to anticipate needs and apply the necessary research to answer those needs. Terry Buss can be reached at the Vermilion district office (403)853-8240.

Irrigation Secretariat manager appointed

Len Ring returns to the department as manager of the Irrigation Secretariat. Ring assumes the new position on April 30, 1996. He replaces Larry Speiss who is retiring after 30 years of service. Ring is a native Albertan, born in Calgary and raised in High River. He holds a BSc from the University of Saskatchewan and a MSc from Colorado State University, both in ag engineering. From 1970 through 1984, he held various engineering and specialist positions with the department's irrigation branch across southern Alberta. Since 1984, he has been the coordinator of the irrigation technology program at Lethbridge Community College. "I am very excited about taking on this new challenge, and I look forward to renewing my association with the irrigation districts and agriculture staff," says Ring. "Alberta is a recognized leader in irrigation and I know by working together we can all further develop irrigation related industries in a resourceful manner." He can be reached at (403)381-5176 in Lethbridge.

Readin', writin', and ready to start

Lee Anne Palutke joined the department as Agri-News editor on April 1. Palutke is a Saskatchewan born, Alberta small-town raised, Grant MacEwan Community College graduate. She has enjoyed 10 years experience as a public affairs officer with various government departments. After almost six years with the fish and wildlife and water resources divisions of Alberta Environmental Protection, she briefly held a position at provincial federal and intergovernmental affairs department

Cont'd on page 6

before joining Alberta Agriculture's communications division. Palutke and her husband, Mike, have two children, David and Deidre. The family lives east of Edmonton where they raise and enjoy riding paint horses, and breed, show and sled-race Samoyed dogs. Other 'spare-time' activities include gardening, writing and painting. Palutke can be reached at (403)422-6958.

Agri-News briefs

Alberta lamb flock continues to grow

Alberta's, and the nation's, lamb flock continues to grow. The Statistics Canada January 1 inventory shows a nine per cent growth rate. All provinces, except for the Maritimes, reported increased flock numbers. Alberta ranked third with a 11 per cent growth rate, Ontario and Quebec tied at 13 per cent. The Alberta flock is estimated at 190,000 head. Overall, the number of breeding animals grew 11 per cent. "This reflects a continued expansion of the sheep industry," says Don Hansen of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's market analysis and statistics branch. At the same time, the U.S. flock is decreasing. "Combined with Canadian dollar's weakness against its U.S. counterpart, that means another strong year for both feeder and slaughter lambs," he adds. For more information, contact Hansen in Edmonton at (403)422-2887. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

British beef BSE scare little effect on North American

No direct beef trading links with continental Europe limited any affect the current British mad cow disease scare will have on North American and Alberta markets. "Secondary effects are more likely," says Ron Gietz, an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst. "Although the events are far removed from our market, it's difficult to believe the negative publicity will be beneficial to our industry," he adds. As well, for any possible shortfall in European beef supply, there will be a corresponding drop in demand. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at (403)427-5376. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Irrigation program terms of reference released

Terms of reference for the Irrigation District Rehabilitation program will ensure the public gets good value of its investment in the 13 irrigation districts' water delivery systems. Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development minister, announced the new program guidelines would be effective on April 1, 1996. The provincial Irrigation Council development the terms of reference after consulting with the irrigation districts. Covered in the terms of reference are project eligibility criteria, the approval and monitoring process, accountability for maintenance and performance measures and the interdistrict funding allocation formula. Any increases or decreased in funding to individual irrigation districts will be phased in over two years. "I am very pleased with the work of the Irrigation Council and the irrigation districts," says Paszkowski. "I am confident that with these guidelines in place, the Irrigation District Rehabiliation Program will sustain the important economic, social, recreation and habtitat benefits provided by the irrigation infrastructure. The infrastructure is a key element of our strategy to increase production of higher value crops and livestock, and in turn, expand the value-added food processing industry." Details of the program guidelines are available by calling the irrigation secretariat in Lethbridge at (403)381-5176.

"Virtual Reality" at 4-H selections

The 1996 Provincial 4-H Selections program will be held at Olds College, April 26 - 29. Running with a virtual reality theme, Selections 1996 will be turned into a "Virtual Rural Community". As well as having the chance to 'surf the net', delegates will be encouraged to discuss how they have managed personal changes and the challenge of changes within their community. Recognizing and working with change is a strong learship quality 4-H members are dedicated to developing. The program provides an opportunity for outstanding 4-H medmbers in Alberta to participate and share ideas in an educational activity. The presentation of the Premier's Award and the naming of this year's 4-H Ambassadors conclude the weekend activities. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark in Airdire at (403)948-8510. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Demand and product affected by shrinking forage acres

Canadian forage acreage is expected to fall this spring and both demand and production in the coming year will be affected. "The greatly improved cereal market and continuing strong outlook are responsible for most of the expected declines," says Matthew Machielse, an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development market analyst. Acreage that sold or comes through the winter in poor shape is expected to be plowed under and returned to annual cultivation. "Production declines are already pointing to higher prices on new crop production," he adds. For more information, contact Machielse in Edmonton at (403)422-3099. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Green zone booklet designed for livestock producers

Livestock producers can learn more about riparian areas – the green zone by water – through **Caring for the Green Zone – Riparian Areas and Grazing Managment**. The booklet was developed through the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Project also known as the *cows and fish project*. "The guide will help livestock producers to better observe and interpret how streams and riparian areas work," says Barry Adam, a regional range manager in Lethbridge. "It will stimulate thinking about changes in livestock management to improve stream and riparian health," he adds. Adams was one of the booklet's authors. For more information, about the booklet or the cows and fish project, contact Adams in Lethbridge at (403)381-5486.

Beef Congress Annual Awards

The deadline for nominations for the fifth annual Alberta Beef Congress awards is April 30, 1996. There are three categories included in the awards: cattleman of the year; beef industry achievement, and forage achievement. The awards are to recognize service and contributions made by individuals to the forage/beef industry. Eligibility for awards include innovative management and production practices, excellent production results, practical research and involvement and leadership within the community and industry. For information and nomination forms call Leroy Ehnes, awards committee chairman, at (403)340-7406 in Red Deer.

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AGRI-NEWS

April 22, 1996

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Five new members on Alberta 4-H Council

The Alberta 4-H Council has welcomed five new members to its board of directors, and said thank you to members who retired from the council.

Joining the council are: Cheryl Mueller of Lacombe, Alberta 4-H Alumni; Greg Hawkwood of Cochrane, Calgary 4-H region; Otto Wedman of Wetaskiwin, west central 4-H region; Carole Tkach of Coronation, east central 4-H region; and, Aaron Fehlauer of Edmonton, northwest 4-H region.

The 20-member provincial 4-H council provides recommendations and a communications link between local 4-H clubs and the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development home economics and 4-H branch about 4-H policies, programs and activities.

At a recent board meeting, department minister Walter Paszkowski presented retirement certificates to three of the retiring council members. They were Bill McGrath of Vermilion, northeastern representative on the council between 1989 and 1996; Jim Sailer of Trochu, Calgary representative from 1992; and, Brett Bonde of Calgary, an alumni representative since 1994. Not at the ceremony, but also receiving a certificate was Gordon Schaber of Leduc, the northwest representative on council since 1988.

A new executive was also chosen at the meeting. Marie Logan of Lomond is the new council president. She succeeds Diane Maull of Metiskow. The first vice-president is Norm Withers of Lavoy and the second vice-president is Arnold Pederson of Vauxhall. Lee Stringer of Sunnynook is the treasurer and Bea Anderson of Beaverlodge is the recording secretary.

Other regional representatives are: Calgary – Gail Companion of High River; west central – Margaret Davis of Rocky Mountain House; northwest – Gordon Fuhr of Morinville; northeast – Lil Carter of Innisfree; Peace – Ed Pimm of Grimshaw; alumni representative Carla Gabert of Saskatoon; representative to the Canadian 4-H Council, Darrel Neal of Lacombe; and, executive secretary and department contact, Mahlon Weir.

Contact: Mahlon Weir at (403)422-4444

Committee works toward national organic standards

Next year the Canadian Organic Advisory Board plans to have a set of national standards defining organic food production that will protect both consumers and growers.

Dexter Schmidt, an organic producer from Peace River, is the chair of the standards committee. The minimum standards will be used to accredit certification organizations that certify producers, processors, retailers and products as organic. Those standards will cover all aspects of the certification from livestock, greenhouse and field crops through growing, post-harvest, processing, packaging and labeling. It will be mandatory for anyone wishing to sell organic products to belong to a certification body.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Five new members on Alberta 4-H Council 1

Committee works toward national organic standards 1

Bigger, better and still blue 2

4-H youth take ownership together 2

Water wells that last for generations 3

Controlling ground squirrels 3

Briefs 4

Alberta
Agriculture, Food and
Rural Development
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – Publishing Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

"The final certification will ensure consumer confidence that the product – from farm gate to the retailer – has met the organic standard," says Schmidt.

A working draft of the standards will be circulated to the committee before seeding time this spring. Schmidt anticipates a reference document will be ready to distribute to the public after harvest, by November. "At that point, we'll be looking for fine tuning before the actual implementation," he says.

Currently, four organizations in Alberta certify organic products. They are the Organic Crop Improvement Association (Alberta OCIA chapter #1), Alberta Sustainable Agriculture Association (SAA, also known as OCIA chapter #2), Biological Food Producers in Alberta (OCIA chapter #3) and the Peace River Organic Producers Association (PROPA) which takes in the Alberta and B.C. Peace River region.

Brochures about the certification process and organic production will be available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offices in late April. For more information about organic products, contact one of the organizations.

Irene Mihailuk is the contact for the OCIA Alberta chapter #1, Box 1209, Athabasca, at T9S 2B1, phone and fax: (403)675-5478.

Gurt Lund is the contact for the SAA at R.R. 3, Site 18, Box 7, Innisfail, T4G 1T8, phone and fax: (403)227-2963.

Allan Graff is the contact for the Biological Food Producers Association at Box 876, Vulcan, T0L 2B0, phone and fax: (403)485-6493.

Marian Buchan is the contact for PROPA at Box 61, Silver Valley, T0H 3E0, phone: (403)351-2115 and fax: (403)351-3769.

Contact: Dexter Schmidt (403)674-8472

Mike Dolinksi (403)422-4873

Bigger, better and still blue

The **'96 Crop Protection With Chemicals** guide, fondly referred to as the '*Blue Book*' is now available.

The *Blue Book* is produced each year to keep Alberta farmers up to date with available herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides. "The *Blue Book* is easy to use and very comprehensive," says Shaffeek Ali, the guide's editor and supervisor of preventative and regulatory services for Alberta Agriculture's pest prevention and regulatory unit.

Well known as the most current guide of its kind, it includes new pesticide registrations, formulation changes, minor use registrations and a complete guide to safety including protective clothing and first aid. It provides details on the latest registered mixes and mix restrictions, application tips, expected results, storage, first aid precautions as well as listing the weeds, diseases or pests controlled by each chemical.

Again this year, annual oilseed and cereal seed treatment recommendations are included in the guide. The leaf staging of peas has been added for proper identification of plant growth for chemical application.

"The '96 gaide includes information on six new chemicals," adds Ali. "Even though it gets bigger each year, we have been able to keep the cost down and there is no price increase for the guide this year. Farmers invest thousands of dollars to chemically treat their crops. The $10, plus GST, invested to get up to date information on those chemicals is a very good value."

The *Blue Book* is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices for $10 (plus GST). The guide can also be ordered from the department's Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. Add $2 (plus GST) for postage and handling. Make your cheques payable to the Provincial Treasurer.

Contact: Shaffeek Ali (403)422-4909

4-H youth take ownership together

Andrea Dear of Wetaskiwin, Alison Gabert of Edberg, Tara Jennings of Barrhead, Charlene Preston of Hanna, and Jody Wamsteeker of Nanton were the five Alberta delegates chosen to participate in the 25th annual National 4-H Citizenship Seminar. Lori McRae of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, travelled with the Alberta delegates as staff chaperone.

Fifty-four 4-H members from across Canada gathered in Ottawa, April 12 - 18 to participate in the seminar. Citizenship is an important part of Canada's cultural heritage and the Canadian 4-H Council has provided the opportunity for more than 1,500 members to celebrate that heritage as well as the rich history, political trends and multicultural flavour of this great country.

The theme of this year's conference, "Canada - Yours, Mine and Ours" focused on the importance of ownership and shared responsibility. Delegates learned that every Canadian has an equally important role to play in Canada's social fabric and future. Conference participants explored the issue of multiculturalism with Ontario Human Rights Commissioner, Elizabeth Hung Sorfleet and other sessions, including an address by Member of Parliament Marlene Cowling, were devoted to learning about the duties of M.P.'s and how Parliament works. In related activities, delegates toured the parliament buildings and the supreme court, viewed question period and joined M.P.'s from their home ridings for a Parliamentary Luncheon.

Cont'd on page 3

Delegates also learned the art of political debate by participating in a mock question period session. Political parties were formed to argue the youth related issues of mandatory military or community service as well as music censorship. At the closing banquet, participants used their new knowledge and experiences to make presentations on "What Citizenship Means to Me".

The success of any 4-H event is largely due to the generous financial assistance provided by its sponsors. Major supporters of the 1996 conference include: Department of Canadian Heritage, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Intra-Ambassador Travel, the Masonic Foundation of Ontario, CP Rail System, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Air Canada, Canadian Seed Grower's Association, SeCan Association, Manitoba 4-H Council and University of Guelph.

Canadian 4-H Council officials and the 1996 delegates thank this year's conference sponsors for their valuable support and their commitment to the 4-H movement and Canada's rural youth.

Contact: *Lori McRae*
(403) 427-4582

Water wells that last for generations

As a result of concerns for the sustainability of rural water wells and their associated ground water sources, a series of water well information materials has been developed by staff from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD), Alberta Environmental Protection (AEP) and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA).

"With over 200,000 water wells in the province of Alberta, and with so many rural families and agribusinesses reliant on ground water, awareness and understanding are needed to sustain the water resources we have today," says Darcy Fitzgerald, an agrologist with engineering services branch. "As roughly 90 per cent of rural Albertans obtain their water from ground water sources, the impact of poor well maintenance on ground water contamination can have serious economic and health related implications."

The series, entitled Water Wells that Last, is an on-going information development project. "This project is an excellent example of how our agencies are working together to serve the public as effectively and efficiently as possible," says Dave Kiely, Regional Water Manager for PFRA.

"The three agencies undertook this cooperative project to increase public awareness of ground water protection, water well maintenance, and to raise the level of understanding new well owners need to have before constructing a well," adds Jennifer Macpherson, section head for AEP's ground water complaints and investigations branch. "With a little understanding of water wells and ground water, most well owners should be able to maintain a safe and secure water supply for many years."

Presently, there are three videos under the *Water Wells that Last* title dealing with issues related to planning and constructing a well, managing and maintaining your well, and methods of shock chlorinating wells. The videos are available from the video libraries at AAFRD district offices, AAFRD's central multi-media library in Edmonton, PFRA district offices or the AEP library in Edmonton.

In addition to the videos, a 90 page manual, entitled Water Wells That Last for Generations, has also been released. "The first 6000 copies of the manual are available at no charge; however, future copies will likely have a fee associated with them," adds Fitzgerald. "This is a great reference source for information on ground water, water well construction, understanding present and future water needs, trouble shooting well problems, and for understanding the importance of properly plugging unused wells and many other issues."

Information on the *Water Wells That Last* manual or videos can be obtained from one of the three individuals listed below.

Contact: *Darcy Fitzgerald*
(403)427-2181
Dave Kiely
(403)495-3307
Jennifer Macpherson
(403)427-6230

Controlling Ground Squirrels

In the last several years, controlling ground squirrels has been a major concern in producing forage crops and managing grazing lands in Alberta. One contributing factor to this concern is the performance of registered rodenticides for ground squirrel control.

Since concentrated liquid strychnine was de-registered three years ago, many new products have emerged in addition to the pre-formulated strychnine products. Manufacturers maintain that these products should work well if label instructions are followed. However, province-wide, the performance of these new baits has been varied.

"This year, the department will continue evaluating the efficacy of field rodent baits in various locations of the province and at various times throughout the growing season," says vertebrate pest specialist, John Bourne. "We will be evaluating many of the current rodenticides as well as conducting palatability tests of several bait substrates that may hold a key to improving the uptake of current registered active ingredients."

While many new products for ground squirrel control have been registered or are in the process of registration, the department remains reserved about their performance in the field until we have had an opportunity to evaluate them under

Cont'd on page 4

Alberta's crop production systems. To this end, the department will continue to advise farmers and landholders about the integrated pest management or holistic approach to ground squirrel control that may or may not include widespread use of rodenticides.

"If you are planning to use rodenticides this spring, early application is a key to success," adds Bourne. "The earlier the bait is used the better, as ground squirrels have fewer food sources early in the spring and consumption of bait will usually be higher."

Contact: *John Bourne*
(403)853-8225

Agri-News briefs

Deadline for Alberta Crow Benefit Offset Program

May 17, 1996 is the deadline for feed grain producers to submit, and cash in, their "A" and "B" certificates. The Crow Benefit Offset Program ended in March of 1994. All certificates issued prior to June 30, 1994, have a cash value of $10 per tonne until May 17, after which they no longer have a cash value. Uncashed certificates should be forwarded as soon as possible to local district offices or to Central Program Support, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 306, 7000 -113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. For information, contact Jo Herrington at (403)427-3189, Edmonton or 1-800-232-7387.

Executive management changes in AFSC

Brian Manning has been appointed president and managing director of the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC). Manning assumes the chief executive officer position after 25 years in agriculture. He graduated from the University of Manitoba with a BSc in agriculture in 1971, then worked for a time in the private sector before joining the Manitoba Agriculture in 1972. Manning's time with the department included service as a regional specialist and then regional director. For the past three years, he has been the general manager of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. Manning takes over the duties of president and managing director from Bob Splane who held the position since 1988. As Splane retires from the president's position, he succeeds Harold Thornton as part-time Chairman of the Board. Harold Thornton, Chairman of the AFSC since 1988, retired on April 1, 1996. For further information, contact Brian Manning at (403)679-1302 in Camrose.

Custom rates survey information available

The survey information for hay and silage making, field, grain harvesting and livestock operations is now available. These detailed reports are useful for determining rates for custom work and are also a good budgeting guide for Alberta producers. A 1996 farm operating cost guide, which is scheduled for release in May, will contain summary tables based on the information in the survey publications. Copies of custom rates surveys can be obtained from Alberta Agriculture, market analysis and statistics branch, 7000, 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. For further information contact Maureen Whitlock of the market analysis and statistics branch, (403)422-3124.

Provincial 4-H horse classic

The second annual Alberta 4-H horse classic is scheduled for July 31 to August 2, 1996. The classic will be held at Olds College, Olds. "This event is open to any registered Alberta 4-H horse project member, giving them a chance to compare and enhance their skills as well as have three days of fun, competition and fellowship," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist. Entry deadline is June 15, 1996, and must include registration payment. Clubs can register all competing members and adults attending on one club entry form. Over the course of the three days in Olds, there will be both team events and individual member events to test participants equine knowledge. Contests include team horse bowl, team demonstration, horse judging, horse knowledge, individual demonstration and marketing contests. Member compete in evenlts according to their age as of January 1 of the project year. For further information contact Henry Wiegman at (403)427-4532.

Norway rat control report

The Norway rat control program is business as usual with all municipal pest control officers completing early spring inspections of all farmsteads, nuisance grounds, elevators and other locations rats may be found within the rat control zone. Currently seven pest control inspectors are blanketing the Alberta-Saskatchewan border rat control zone, a distance of 18 miles into Alberta, for signs of the pest. "At the conclusion of the 1995-1996 fiscal year, a total of eight Norway rat infestations were reported within the rat control zone," says John Bourne, Alberta Agriculture's vertebrate pest specialist. "This is nearly a record all-time low that makes us very proud and shows that Albertans can make a difference. The help we receive from Albertans who have phoned in and reported rats is sincerely appreciated." Norway rat control requires several continuous years of very low to zero numbers to indicate near successful extermination of this most persistent agricultural pest. The department's campaign against Norway rats continues with expanded public awareness initiatives, including a new rat poster reminding landowners of warning signals and the correct eradication procedures to ensure proper follow-up steps are taken to prevent or remove rats wherever they occur. John Bourne can be reached at (403)853-8225, Vermilion, for further information.

Western provinces biggest supporters of national 4-H program

More than 75 per cent of the funds donated to the Canadian 4-H Council, were raised in the western provinces. In 1996 $598 has been collected, an increase over last year. 4-H clubs have donated almost $2,000 since the program started in 1993. All funds are used to support and strengthen 4-H programs at a national level. Each year the top contributing club receives a special award. The 1995 winner is the Mayerthorpe 4-H beef club. In true Alberta style, the Mayerthorpe club got behind the program supporting the efforts to offer new programs and services, expand the supply service and send more delegates to national programs. For further information on the national program, contact provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist, Carol Sullivan at (403)427-4499, Edmonton.

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AGRI-NEWS

April 29, 1996

CANADIANA

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Ag ed institute changes partners

The University of Alberta is the new official university partner for the Summer Agricultural Education Institute.

This year is the seventh annual institute designed for teachers and education students. It gives them an opportunity to experience the agricultural industry hands-on, develop practical curriculum and an option to earn credit for a fourth-year university level course. Graduates also become agricultural ambassadors for their schools.

Until this year the institute's university partner was University of Lethbridge. The University of Alberta is now taking on that role and providing continuing professional development advice. "Our new university partner will also facilitate the course being recognized at both University of Lethbridge and University of Calgary," says Betty Gabert, agricultural awareness specialist and co-ordinator of the Alberta Agriculture in the Classroom program.

"We're also providing institute participants with two options, either taking it as a full-credit course or as a non-credit option," she adds. "This means we've improving the integrity of the course. Those participants who chose to go for the credit will work with a professor to finish the project and will receive a mark."

As part of the institute program, the tuition and fees will be subsidized by the institute's major sponsor, UFA. As well, the credit option will be open for two years after participants complete the institute program.

"Registration is still limited to 30," notes Gabert, "and the application deadline is May 31. The institute is open to practising Alberta teachers at all grade levels and senior education students who have completed their practicum.

The 1996 institute will be held at Lakeland College in Vermilion July 21 through 28. The institution is hosted by the province's agricultural colleges on a rotating basis. Last year's institute was in Lethbridge.

The other major institute partners is the Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program. A number of commodity groups and agribusinesses also support the institute, as do local organizations and farm family hosts.

Contact: *Betty Gabert*
(403)427-2171

This Week

Ag ed institute changes partners 1

Direct seeding of field peas 2

Managing yield variability in high value row crops 2

Rimbey 4-Her province's best speaker 3

1996 grasshopper forecast 3

Assess nitrogen fertilizer requirements carefully 3

Sustainable cropping system research initial results 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Direct seeding of field peas

Direct seeding of field peas has many benefits for producers including: lower input costs of fuel, equipment maintenance and labour; conservation of soil moisture; improved soil tilth; and conservation of topsoil which is prone to erosion by wind and water.

During the summer of 1995, a detailed research study was conducted to measure yield rates of selected cultivars under different tillage systems and herbicide treatments to determine which system is best suited for direct seeding of field peas.

The study involved four pea cultivars, three tillage systems, and five herbicide treatments. It was conducted at two sites, in Edmonton on a black chernozemic soil, and in Warburg on a grey wooded luvisolic soil. The major weed population at the Edmonton site was volunteer barley. At the Warburg site the major weed infestation was wild oats.

The peas were seeded into barley stubble under conventional tillage, minimum tillage, and direct seeding. The four cultivars seeded were Highlight, Montana, Patriot, and Radley.

The five different herbicide treatments used were Basagran, Pursuit, a new herbicide which is not registered called P263, Edge, and a control treatment. Basagran, Pursuit, and P263 were all applied as post-emergents whereas Edge was fall applied and soil incorporated into the minimum and conventional plots. On the direct seeded plots the Edge was surface applied without soil incorporation.

The P263 herbicide treatments achieved the highest yields under all three tillage treatments. It had weed control of over 90 per cent. Pursuit was nearly 80 per cent effective while fall applied Edge was under 50 per cent.

The Control and Basagran plots at Warburg were choked out by wild oats, having zero per cent wild oat control.

The new herbicide P263 (not registered) worked well at both sites. It controlled the volunteer barley in Edmonton and the wild oats at Warburg. The yield for P263 was significantly higher than all of the remaining herbicide treatments. The Pursuit treatments were significantly lower than P263 but considerably higher than the Edge and Basagran treatments.

Yields from the Edge treatments were lower than P263 and Pursuit, but were significantly higher than Basagran and the control treatments. There were no significant differences observed between the Basagran and control treatments.

Problems were noted with the granular applicator used to apply Edge during the fall of 1994. The applicator used was very susceptible to the rough field surface and consequently did not distribute the Edge uniformly.

Weed control results are not typical of some field trials conducted by DowElanco Canada and Agriculture Canada. Those trials indicate that Edge Granular demonstrated a high degree of weed control in both fall and spring applications. Their results had about 90 per cent control of volunteer barley and wild oats. A different applicator was used during the fall of 1995. A higher yield is expected for the Edge treatments in 1996.

There were some significant differences between cultivars at the Edmonton site. Highlight yielded significantly higher than Patriot and Radley. There was no significant difference between yields among the Montana and Patriot cultivars. Radley yielded significantly lower than the Highlight and Montana cultivars. There were some significant differences between cultivars at the Warburg site. The yields for Highlight and Patriot were significantly higher than the Montana and Radley yields. There were no significant differences between tillage treatments at both the Edmonton and Warburg sites.

Contact: Eric Oosterhuis
(403)422-4385

Managing yield variability in high value row crops

Using precision farming technology to improve production management and plant-to-plant uniformity to increase yield and quality is of growing interest to Alberta producers. Variability in marketable yield can mean a substantial dollar difference per acre in high value row crops. While significant improvements have been made in the past decade additional study is needed to assist Alberta farmers maximize their production.

To measure variations in soil fertility and the variability in yield within a single field, a first year demonstration, using global positioning systems (GPS) for fertility management of irrigated potatoes, was conducted near Taber in 1995.

"This is the first project of this type conducted in western Canada," says Jack Payne, a crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "While the first year results don't conclusively prove the benefits of site specific fertilizing, they have given us a good start point in determining which growing factors can be successfully managed."

For the demonstration, a 40 acre portion of a potato field was blocked into eight 5-acre plots using GPS equipment. Soil was sampled to a depth of 60 cm in each plot. Target fertility levels for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium were selected. Based on soil test results for the individual 5-acre test plots, four of the eight were individually fertilized to bring the nutrient levels in each plot up to preselected target levels. The other four test plots were broadcast fertilized the same as the rest of the field, according to the sample test results for the entire field.

Results from this first year showed a marketable yield variation from 13.4 tonnes per acre to 18.6 tonnes per acre in the broadcast fertilized test plots. At $110 per tonne, a difference of 5.2 tonne per acre is substantial.

Cont'd on page 3

The four test plots which received individual, site-specific fertilizer demonstrated a higher yield and considerably less variation. The yield variability among these four plots was from 17.4 tonnes per acre to 19.3 tonnes per acre, a difference of 1.9 tonne.

"The results are encouraging," adds Payne. "This first year's results can't be considered conclusive. We are repeating the demonstration again this year using barley. We are looking forward to comparing the two years' results and we will make the data on the demonstration available."

Copies of the complete report on year one of this demonstration, can be obtained from the Taber district office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Jack Payne*
(403)223-7907

Rimbey 4-Her province's best speaker

Lars Ormberg spoke on *A Matter of National Pride* and captured the 1996 Alberta 4-H Public Speaking title.

Ormberg, a member of the Rimbey 4-H Club for the past six years, was one of 14 top 4-Hers who qualified for the recent competition at the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede's Kinsmen Centre. All 14 had to speak at three levels of competition to reach the provincial finals.

Each finalist had less than two weeks to research and prepare a four to six minute speech on the selected "What's a Family Farm to Do..." topic. Ormberg's *A Matter of National Pride* plus his impromptu speech won him first place.

"4-Hers are concerned with the future of Agriculture in Alberta. I was impressed with the high calibre of speakers and their creative approach to dealing with a real life issue," commented Dianne Finstad of Red Deer's RDTV. Finstad was one of six judges for the competition.

Tim Wray of Irricana finished second. His prepared speech was titled *A Pilar of Stability in a Time of Change*. *Cultivating a Dream* won third place for Jennifer Lee of Valhalla Centre.

"Alberta's 4-H program encourages the development and growth of communications skills in all it's members. 4-H communications activities vary from doing demonstrations, chairing club meetings, voicing radio spots to competing in events like this" says Carol Sullivan the Provincial 4-H communications & marketing specialist.

The 1996 Provincial Public Speaking Finals were sponsored by the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
403 427 4499

1996 grasshopper forecast

The threat of grasshopper damage to crops and rangeland is expected to increase moderately in 1996.

The abundance of mature grasshoppers recorded during a survey completed in August, 1995, is higher than the previous few years. Alberta and Saskatchewan experienced a decline in grasshopper numbers during the early 1990's, due to rainfall and cool weather. In 1996, the overall threat to crop production from grasshoppers is forecast to be greater, but not anywhere as severe as the infestation outbreak in 1984-86.

"The damage potential of grasshoppers is low in districts that had above average rainfall in 1995," says Mike Dolinski, provincial entomologist. "The severity of grasshopper infestations in the coming year depends primarily on the weather and the abundance of grasshoppers in the area during the summer last year."

Grasshoppers tend to thrive under moderately dry conditions. A warm dry spring and early summer will increase survival of the hatchlings and the potential for subsequent damage to crops.

Field margins, fence lines, roadsides and crops grown on stubble should be watched closely when hatching begins in spring. When using insecticides, carefully observe precautions for user safety, correct use and proximity to threatened wildlife.

Updates of the status of grasshopper populations will be available in the spring.

Contact: *Mike Dolinski*
(403)422-4873

Assess nitrogen fertilizer requirements carefully

Many farmers are having a difficult time deciding how much nitrogen (N) fertilizer to apply to cereal and oilseed crops this spring. With crop yields across Alberta being normal to above normal for the past three to five years, there has been a higher than normal nutrient removal from many fields across much of Alberta.

Soil sampling in the fall of 1995, particularly in southern and central Alberta, shows many stubble fields are quite low in soil nitrogen. This means having to put on a little extra nitrogen this year.

The quandary farmers are having stems from the dramatic price increase of nitrogen fertilizer. However, grain prices have increased more than fertilizer prices. Also, nutrients removed from long term crop production must be replaced or crop yields will rapidly decline and soil quality will deteriorate. These factors need to be considered when making this important decision.

Cont'd on page 4

"On the positive side, putting on an optimum amount of nitrogen generally means good crop quality and higher grain protein." says Ross McKenzie, agronomist with Agriculture in Lethbridge.

Problems of pieball (a disease causing starchy kernels) are also greatly reduced when adequate levels of nitrogen are available for crop growth.

To ensure that the right amount of nitrogen fertilizer is used, fields should be soil tested in the spring, preferably down to 24 inches. The soil test results can be discussed with an agronomist at a soil testing lab or a crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to ensure that the right balance of nitrogen is applied with other fertilizer needs.

Contact: Ross H. McKenzie
(403)381-5842

Sustainable cropping systems research initial results

A few important conclusions have been generated from this long term crop rotation study. Findings show that rotations with an appropriate balance of cereal, oilseed, and pulse crops, while minimizing summer fallow, are more productive than cereal monocultures such as continuous wheat.

The study initiated in 1991 and the rotations commenced in 1992. This research will generate valuable information on the long term effects of different crop rotations grown in conventional tillage systems as well as direct seeded systems.

Most direct seeding research is conducted over a relatively short time span of one or two years. The length of time this study has been allowed to continue is an important factor in achieving conclusive results.

The study site is located just outside of the town of Three Hills and was chosen because the site represents a dark brown to thin black transition zone. This site represents a significant portion of Alberta farmland where previous crop rotation studies were not conducted. The experimental design consists of 20 main plots per each of the three replicate blocks. The 20 main plots are randomly assigned and each represent a specific phase of one of the nine specific crop rotations assessed in the study. The nine crop rotations are as follows:

#1- Continuous wheat
#2- Canola - barley - peas - wheat
#3- wheat - fallow
#4- Wheat - green manure (peas)
#5- Wheat - wheat - fallow
#6- Peas - wheat - fallow
#7- Continuous Brome grass
#8- Continuous Alfalfa and Brome grass
#9- Wheat - Peas and Oats silage - fall rye

Each rotation treatment is split by two tillage treatments: conventional tillage and direct seeding.

This is an ongoing study where reports are made available each year.

Contact: Eric Oosterhuis
(403)422-4385

Agri-News briefs

Agricultural land values in Alberta

The 1994 agricultural real estate situation has been reviewed and reported in the 1994 Agricultural Real Estate Values Report, prepared by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The report shows land values were highest in the first quarter, at $492 per acre, with prices decreasing to $435 per acre in the fourth quarter. The average price was $472 per acre for the year. Over all, there was a 10.3 per cent increase in agricultural land values in 1994. "All indications for 1995 mark an upward trend for agricultural land values," says Allan Presiznuk of the production economics branch. The report is available through Agriculture's publishing branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. For further information, contact Allan Presiznuk at (403)422-4240.

Bertha Armyworm forecast for 1996

The density of moth catches along with weather conditions form the basis of regional forecast of damage potential. As the season progresses, weather data will be used to drive a development model to predict the timing of the different life stages of the bertha armyworm. The results of the model will be given to industry, provincial extension and government agencies as a forecast map. The forecast will provide damage potential of bertha armyworm during the 1996 growing season to producers. All growers are urged to monitor canola fields during the susceptible period, late July through August, in all infested areas which will be at risk based on pheromone trap counts conducted throughout July. An insecticide application is recommended when larvae are abundant enough that the possible cost in crop damage is greater than the cost of pest control. For further information, contact Mike Dolinski, (403)422-4873, Edmonton.

Surfing the FoodNet

This year's annual Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD) conference is headed into cyberspace. Complete with an intriguing mix of informed speakers and demonstrations, grocers will be educated, enlightened and entertained at the 1996 trade gathering. The conference will be held in Victoria, B.C. on May 26 to 29, 1996. The five day program, put together by the conference committee, starts off with the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards. This year a record 83 entries are competing to be recognized as the most innovative product in its category to grace the grocery shelves in 1995. Business sessions on marketing, product and promotion highlight the duration of the conference. For further information, contact Bryan Walton, CCGD vice-president western region, at (403)250-6608, Calgary.

Coming agricultural events notice

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Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in the summer or fall of 1996?

1. Please state the **name** of the event(s):

2. **When** is the event being held?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel or convention centre:

4. Please give **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed:

5. This form has been **completed by** what organization? Please include your phone number:

Please return this form by May 25, 1996 to:

Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
Phone: (403)422-6958 Fax:(403)427-2861

"*Coming agricultural events*" is published quarterly in **Agri-News**.
The next list will be **June 3, 1996**.

AGRI-NEWS

May 6, 1996

CANADIANA

JUN 4 1996

Elkwater 4-H member receives Premier's Award

An 18 year old high school student from Elkwater is the 1996 recipient of the Alberta 4-H program's highest honour.

Dalyce Russill was chosen as the Premier's Award winner from a group of finalists known as the Premier's Award Group. The 1996 group includes: Dalyce Russill, Elkwater; Carmen Webber, Okotoks; Holly Johanson, Westerose; Jason Bishell, Veteran; Shelly Menzak, Ranfurly; Chris Bowman, Onoway; and, Candace Boyne, Wembley.

During the four day annual Alberta 4-H Selections program in Olds, April 26-29, 136 of the province's top 4-H members participated in activities designed to improve leadership, group interaction and life skills. This year's theme was "Virtual Reality: Managing Change in Our Changing World". With Selections 1996 being turned into a 'virtual community', delegates were challenged to exhibit leadership by managing a community change and discussing personal experiences with change. The delegates were given the opportunity to 'surf the net' and consider how changes in technology may affect their reality.

"I am excited to be named the recipient of the 33rd Premier's Award," says Russill. "It is a great honour to represent Alberta 4-H." As one of her responsibilities, she will represent Alberta at the Young Foresters Camp in Prince Edward Island in July, 1996.

For the past year Russill has been an active member of the Coaldale Equestrian 4-H Light Horse Club and was previously a member in the Medicine Hat Light Horse Club for seven years. As well as holding executive positions in her club, she has participated in various regional and provincial 4-H activities. Russill is also involved with other youth groups.

Roy Brassard, MLA Olds-Didsbury, presented Russill with the award trophy on behalf of Premier Klein and the Government of Alberta. Russill will officially accept her award from Premier Klein at a later date. Brassard also extended greetings and congratulations to the other participants and award recipients. The many sponsors of the 4-H program were recognized by Brassard.

Russill succeeds Tracy Gardner of Olds, who received the Premier's Award in 1995.

Trip awards to 58 delegates were also announced at the awards breakfast on April 29. These members will represent Alberta at major educational programs and tours throughout Canada and the United States over the next 12 months.

Alberta 4-Hers, 16 years of age and older, can participate at Selections. Members are evaluated throughout the weekend to determine their eligibility for trip awards. The selection process includes points from their yearly 4-H diaries, a current events/4-H examination, peer evaluation and group interaction assessment by leaders.

This Week

Elkwater 4-H member receives Premier's Award 1

Growing Alberta 2

Summer Farm Employment Program '96 2

Spring grazing dilemma 3

May 15 deadline for 4-H scholarships application 3

Animal welfare is 4-H L.A.W. 3

Changes to 4-H Foundation Board of Directors 4

Briefs 5

*Agri-News*ˇ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Selections is organized by the home economics and 4-H branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. It is sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Pool Ltd., United Grain Growers, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact:	*Dalyce Russill*	*Marguerite Stark*
	(403)893-3899	*(403)948-8510*

Growing Alberta

From French perfume and Italian pasta to exotic feathers used in tying flies, Alberta agriculture is a diverse and growing industry. This is the main message of a three phase communications effort targeted to urban Albertans.

"Agriculture is vital to Alberta's future. The industry is fuelling the growth of Alberta and this campaign will get that message out," says Walter Paszkowski, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development minister. "The value of Alberta products is recognized world wide. Last year, the province exported 63 per cent of our agricultural products to 138 countries around the world."

Agriculture, food processing and value-added industries bring over $11 billion of economic activity to the province and support 110,000 direct jobs in Alberta. Indirectly, agriculture and food industry affect one in three jobs in the province. The industry message, ***'Growing more than food, growing Alberta'***, is not simply one of economics, the awareness campaign also highlights the environmental standards employed and the sustainability of a future focused, essential industry.

"Most Albertans would name agriculture as one of the top three industries in Alberta, yet they know little about it," says Ron Brown, chairman of the Growing Alberta Steering Committee. "This partnership between industry and government, is a very positive and active awareness program intended to show the many ways agriculture touches our lives and supports our province today and tomorrow."

Initiated in 1995, industry partners and the Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement have embarked on a three-phase public awareness program to inform people about sustainable agriculture and promote the industry'scommitment to stewardship.

Over the next 18 months, the Growing Alberta campaign will communicate to urban Albertans a general awareness of agriculture, the environmental initiatives underway in agriculture and technological advances and future initiatives.

Much of Alberta's future depends on agri-food exports. Alberta's reputation and clean image is a big part of the province's success and growth in international markets.

In Alberta, agriculture industry leaders are setting protocols for everything from animal welfare and grazing levels to the integration of agri-food production and processing. The industry is working together to build solid supply chains, strong markets and a sustainable future.

Contact: *Jim Waters*
Program Manager, Growing Alberta
(403)231-1615

Summer Farm Employment Program 96

A popular government farm labour program for youth will be running again this summer. The sum of $330,000 has been budgeted for the 1996 Summer Farm Employment Program (SFEP).

"The SFEP provides Alberta's youth with the opportunity to gain farm work experience as part of Alberta's Summer Temporary Employment Program," says SFEP program coordinator, Christine Paproski of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Since the program began in 1972, it has helped more than 35,000 young people learn more about farming."

Through the program, full-time farmers receive assistance to hire young Albertans from July 2 to August 31. The Alberta government pays up to half of the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $330 per month.

Prospective employees must be between 15 and 24 years of age and they cannot be a relative of the employer. Employment must be a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Up to 450 young people will be accepted into the 1996 program. Application forms are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, so interested employers and employees should submit their application as soon as possible. Employers and employees must apply together.

Application forms and program guidelines are available as of **May 6** from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices.

Application forms will be accepted until all program funds are committed or May 31, whichever comes first. Each year, there is so much interest in the program that some applicants have to be turned away. However, all producers have an equal opportunity to apply.

Contact: *Christine Paproski*
(403) 427-3124

Spring grazing dilemma

Every spring cattle producers face the same question - when is the grass ready to support grazing?

"Generally it is good to hold cattle on feeding grounds until most of the pasture is four to six inches tall," says Lorne Erickson, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Allowing the pasture to begin recovering root reserves used throughout winter help the stand maintain its health, both quality and quantity, to the end of grazing season."

Unfortunately, the desired six inches of top growth is not always accomplished by May 15. Soil temperature, moisture, fertility, the mix and health of plants in the pasture will determine how soon it is ready for gazing.

"This year, with feed costs higher than the oldest cows can remember, and most bale yards nearly empty, many herds will go to grass as soon as it starts looking more green than brown," adds Erickson. "For those in this situation, there are a few grazing management options that can reduce negative effects on pasture health and season-long growth."

First pasture – turn out first on pasture that has the greatest ability to recover from early grazing abuse. Select an area that has a higher concentration of early season grasses or grasses that regrow quickly.

Temporary electric fencing – controlling access to sensitive areas will ensure they are not harmed and will allow parts of the pasture to reach proper height before it is grazed.

Annual forages – seed a few acres of oats or fall rye that can be grazed mid-season to provide some rest to the permanent pastures. If oats are grazed before the end of June, they can still regrow enough to be cut for feed.

Fertilizer applications – can replace some of the growth and pasture health lost by grazing too soon. Consider a split application instead of all at once. For example, spread half the fertilizer when you normally would. Apply the other half after an early summer grazing so it feeds the grass during the last part of the growing season. If feed costs remain high, an investment in fertilizer this spring could be an effective way to reduce next winter's

feed bill through better hay production and longer grazing.

Fall grazing – so you are not short of grass in the fall, consider a fertilizer application on hay fields to encourage some second growth for grazing or plan ahead to turn the cattle out on stubble after harvest.

"These few ideas and suggestions may require some extra labour and cash," says Erickson. "But, if you're asking more from your pasture this spring, you have to give something back as well."

Contact: Lorne Erickson
(403)843-2201

May 15 deadline for 4-H scholarships application

This year, 85 scholarships are available to former and current Alberta 4-Hers attending post-secondary institutions in the fall

Applications must be in by May 15, 1996. Any applications received after that date will not be accepted.

"Applications for the 4-H scholarships are available from all Alberta rural high schools and post-secondary institutions, regional 4-H offices and the provincial 4-H office," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist. "There is over $50,000 in scholarships available this year and everyone is encouraged to apply."

Criteria for the scholarships varies. Most are based on academic skills, community involvement and 4-H background, while some are non-academic, some are based on leadership skills, and others on the area of the province the member comes from.

"For anyone with access to the Internet, application forms can be down loaded from the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development web site at **HTTP://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4H**," adds Sullivan. "This year, only typed applications will be accepted."

For more information on 4-H scholarships in Alberta, contact the 4-H branch in Edmonton at (403)422-4444, or your regional 4-H specialist.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403)427-4499

Animal welfare is 4-H L.A.W.

"Learning about animal welfare" is the newest learning and ambassador opportunity for Alberta 4-Hers with animal-related projects.

"*Alberta 4-H L.A.W.* can be integrated into all 4-H livestock projects and has information and material about animal care issues," says Henry Wiegman, 4-H agriculture specialist.

The L.A.W. program includes a chapter to be inserted into all livestock project unit books with informative material and individual learning activities. It also provides information to 4-H leaders with suggested club activities including presentations and workshops.

"This program will inform 4-H members and their families about the animal welfare issue, the need for responsible animal care and growing animal rights concerns," he adds.

Part of the program is the Creed of the 4-H Stockkeeper. Members are encouraged to abide by this creed for each 4-H animal project.

Cont'd on page 4

"The creed also motivates members to improve their animal management practices where needed. By insuring that members take responsible care of their animals, 4-Hers will gain the confidence and pride needed to publicly explain the care they give their animals," says Susan Kitchen, manager of the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC).

The program is co-sponsored by AFAC. "AFAC's mandate is to promote responsible animal care to ensure today's public that the food they eat has been humanely produced," says Peter Schuld, dairy and beef producer from Iron Springs and chairman of AFAC. "4-H members can definitely help us bridge the knowledge and attitude gap between food producers and food consumers. 4-H livestock events provide an excellent opportunity for positive consumer education about animal agriculture."

One reason for the program is to counterbalance allegations and prevent confrontations with animal right activist groups. Both People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Canadians for Ethical Treatment of Food Animals (CETFA) have spoken out against 4-H by saying livestock programs are cruel to children and animals.

"By ensuring that 4-H members are taking care of their animals, helping members understand the diversity of views on animal use, and preparing them to express and support their actions, 4-H members will be able to confidently explain the care they give their animals, educate the public about animal agriculture and counter claims of animal rights activists," says Wiegman.

"As animal care ambassadors 4-H members will play and important role in improving public awareness of the responsible, humane actions of Alberta's agriculture community," adds Schuld.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman* *(403)422-4444* *Susan Kitchen* *(403)777-0445*

Changes to 4-H Foundation Board of Directors

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta recently held its annual meeting at the Alberta 4-H Centre which resulted in some changes to the board of directors.

The foundation regretfully said farewell to retiring directors Bill McGrath of Vermilion, Dale Cole of Vegreville and Art Griffith of Balzac. Their contributions to the foundation have been truly significant. It has been an honour to have them serve on the foundation board.

Elaine Almberg of Czar, Lloyd Marshman of Carbon, Peter Dobbie of Vegreville and Norm Withers of Lavoy are the new representatives selected by Alberta 4-H Council at their annual meeting in March. Their fresh new ideas and enthusiasm are eagerly anticipated.

Congratulations are also extended to Gordon Sherwood of Winfield who was elected to another 3 year term and appointed Vice Chairman for the board. Sherwood has served as chairman of the Site Management Committee at the Alberta 4-H Centre. Because of his proximity to the Centre, Sherwood puts in many hours at the site. The Foundation is fortunate to have such a dedicated director living so close to the Centre.

The final change saw the election of Les Lyster, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development representative, as Treasurer. Jerry Hall of Calgary will serve one more year as Chairman.

The foundation looks forward to serving 4-H in the coming year and welcomes any inquiries you may have. Below is a complete list of directors:

Jerry Hall, chairman, Calgary	263-4594 (b)
Angus Park, past chairman, Trochu	442-2504
Gordon Sherwood, vice chairman, Winfield	682-2187
Les Lyster, AB Agric, treasurer, Edmonton	427-2440 (b)
Diane Maull, director, Metiskow	857-3779
Peter Dobbie, director, Vegreville	632-2877 (b)
Marie Logan, director, Lomond	792-3696
Stella Pimm, director, Grimshaw	338-2285
Elaine Almberg, director, Czar	857-2133
Lloyd Marshman, director, Carbon	533-2315
Norm Withers, director, Lavoy	632-2514
Joan Niblock, director, Red Deer	342-4300
Marguerite Stark, branch liaison, Airdrie	948-8510 (b)
Barry McDonald, executive director (staff)	682-2153 (b)
Vicki Berger, executive assistant (staff)	427-2541 (b)

Contact: *Vicki Berger*
(403)427-2541

Farm and ranch business management conference

The annual conference of the National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association is being held in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, U.S. on June 9 to 12, 1996. John Whitehead, from Lethbridge, is the association's treasurer and Terry Murray, another Albertan, is chair of the Canadian Council. Several Albertans and Canadians are members of this association and, undoubtedly, will be attending the conference. For further information, contact John Whitehead at (403)320-3311 or 328-8989, Lethbridge.

Agri-News briefs

Census 96

On Tuesday, May 14, farm operators will be asked to participate in the federal Census of Agriculture. The census will update the profile of Canadian farm businesses. Participation in the census should be viewed as one of the most important things Alberta farmers will do this spring. The census covers land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and equipment, farm income and land management practices. The information is not only for government use, but to help agribusinesses prepare production and marketing plans and farmers evaluate their farming methods. It is a legal requirement to conduct a census every five years, the last census was held in 1991. The 1996 census questionnaire is to be filled in by the person(s) responsible for the day-to-day management decisions of an agricultural operation. A tip sheet on filling out the questionnaire and additional information can be obtained by calling Alf Cryderman, communications officer for 1996 Census of Canada, at (403)495-5483, Edmonton.

Barley Silage Production

The interactive effects of fertilizer and precipitation complicate the decision farmers must make when selecting barley varieties and determining fertilizer requirements for silage production. Limited research has been conducted to determine which barley varieties have the best yield potential, agronomic characteristics and feed quality for silage production in the various soils and climate differenced found in Alberta. The first and second year results of a study on optimum barley silage production show that there are significant differences among barley varieties in dry matter silage production. Some general observations on varietal yield were made. A.C. Lacombe performed very well throughout the province. The varietal Seebe performed quite well in central Alberta. Varietal C.D.C.Earl often didn't yield quite as well but was the most resistent to lodging. Nitrogen and phosphate fertilizer can dramatically increase silage yield potential when soil test levels of these nutrients are low. There is often a profound interaction effect between nitrogen and variety on silage protein level. The study is continuing in 1996 with the continued support of the Alberta Barley Commission and the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. A detailed annual report is available. For a copy of the report, or for further information, contact Ross McKenzie (403)381-5126, Lethbridge.

Agricultural biotechnology international conference

On June 11 to 14 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC) will hold a symposium focusing exclusively on the global agricultural biotechnology industry. Under the theme, 'AgBiotech: Foundation for the Future', the symposium will feature accomplishments, advancements and explore issues and opportunities in areas of crop development, animal science, microbials, technology transfer and business development. The international panel of speakers will address the progress made and the potential yet to be realized in agricultural biotechnology. For more information contact The Signature Group (306)934-1772 or fax (306)664-6615.

Fertilizing spring wheat for yield and protein

To fertilize or not to fertilize spring wheat with additional nitrogen to achieve high protein, that is the question many farmers are asking in a planned attempt to obtain a protein premium. Environmental conditions play a major role in affecting wheat protein content. The main factors are soil nitrogen levels at the time of seeding; the amount of nitrogen fertilizer applied prior to seeding or in-crop application; soil moisture at time of seeding; timing and amount of precipitation during the growing season; and the temperature and number of warm days during the growing season. While some positive results have been seen in fertilizing for protein rather than yield, it can be very risky. The probability for reaching high protein is greatly affected by weather conditions. If you decide to try fertilizing for high protein this year, do it on a small scale to keep your risk to a minimum. For further information, contact Ross McKenzie at (403)381-5126, Lethbridge.

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AGRI-NEWS

May 13, 1996

CANADIANA
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Shelterbelts and erosion control

Stewardship starts with knowing your soil and planning what you grow. Preventing erosion by minimizing the amount of wind cropland soil is exposed to is an important step, especially in erosion prone areas. Preserving some native plants and trees and using shelterbelts are effective ways of managing erosion.

"During the spring and into June, cropland soils aren't yet protected by crop cover and strong, persistent winds can be a real threat to soil," says Craig Sprout, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development soil conservation technologist in Airdrie. "There are approaches to help reduce soil erosion, one is the use of tree shelterbelts."

A province wide study conducted from 1993 to 1995 looked at the use of shelterbelts. It was found that there can be crop yield increases out to 10-15 times the height of shelterbelt. This increase in yield, on average, makes up for the loss in yield from the space taken by the trees and in what is termed the "competition zone" which extends to the end of the tree roots.

"Shelterbelts can increase crop yield as well as helping with erosion problems," adds Sprout. "Tree groupings reduce wind speed resulting in marked soil conservation."

While tall trees are of greatest benefit, all wind-breaking stands help. New shelterbelts may not be as high as established ones, but the great thing is ... they grow. Drought resistant shrubs, such as caragana, are also effective.

"The major benefit of shelterbelts is soil conservation," says Sprout. "They also provide habitat for wildlife and a protection, especially in some Alberta areas, for tough to grow crops such as potatoes, saskatoons, strawberries and tree fruits."

Shelterbelts can be used effectively to protect against soil loss in all agricultural areas of Alberta, and especially in the dry, windy south.

Contact: Craig Sprout
(403)948-8506

Don't leave it to Cleavers

Cleavers have been spreading rapidly across much of the canola growing area of Alberta during the past few years.

Cleavers contamination can result in a reduction in grade of crops. As little as one cleavers seed in a 25 gram sample of canola, the result of only five weeds per square metre, will downgrade the crop from a number one to sample.

Cleavers competition with crops can result in a 20 per cent yield loss as the weed steals light, moisture and nutrients from the canola crop.

Similar in shape and size to canola, cleavers seed is nearly impossible to separate mechanically. Canola contaminated with cleavers should not be kept for seed.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Shelterbelts and erosion control 1
Don't leave it to cleavers 1
Popular video titles upgraded 2
Direct seeding demo days 2
Follow basic handling and washing rules 3
Low input and organic crops 3
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

"Sticky, clinging cleavers vines often cause lodging and can get tangled up in harvesting equipment," says Kelly Patzer, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Cleavers is a major problem in many cereal and oilseed fields and, in short, can make life difficult at harvest."

Cleavers are native to naturally wooded areas of Alberta, but with the expansion of canola acres and the advent of reduced tillage, have become widely spread in cropland. They can be readily identified by their square, clinging, vinelike stems.

"Prevention of infestation is the best defence against cleavers," adds Patzer. "Plant certified seed. There is a zero tolerance limit for cleavers in pedigreed seed under the Canada Seeds Act."

Other precautions are to tarp grain during transport, clean tillage and harvest equipment before moving between fields, and avoid cleavers seed contained in forage and livestock manure from cleavers affected areas.

Sound cultural practices can help with a cleavers problem. If cleavers is already a problem, crop rotation including competitive crops such as wheat and barley, will help by suppressing the weed and allowing an expanded choice of herbicide. Spring and/or fall tillage or a corresponding herbicide burnoff will help in controlling early spring and late fall germinated seedlings as well as over-wintered plants.

Early herbicide application can be an effective control measure, but weed staging is critical. For more consistent control, cleavers should be sprayed at the one-two whorl stage. Results from spraying at later stages are less predictable. Herbicide options are many. *Crop Protection with Chemicals 1996*, (the blue book) contains the most current information and can be obtained at district offices of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development or the publications office,
7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6,
phone 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: Kelly Patzer
(403)652-8300

Popular video titles upgraded

The multi-media branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) has upgraded two of its more popular video titles. While *'Outstanding in Your Field: Diagnosing Crop Problems'* just received some extra material, *'Agriculture: Alberta's Advantage'* was completely redone.

'Outstanding in Your Field: Diagnosing Crop Problems' shows the viewer how to analyze crop problems by using the same steps a doctor does in diagnosing patient illness. "We added a new section on the growth stages of cereal crops," says multi-media branch information officer Ken Blackley. "It's there to help producers decide when to spray, and to help them to determine what the yield potential will be."

The second updated title, *'Agriculture: Alberta's Advantage,'* has seen many years of service as a topnotch promotional vehicle for the entire agricultural and food industry. It received a major overhaul. "The original version was made in the mid-1980s. Obviously, a lot has changed in the industry since then. We felt that the video needed a thorough reworking to reflect these changes," says Blackley. "Instead of concentrating on raw commodity production, this version examines each segment of this diverse industry for its value-added products. The video also looks at the impact new technologies have played and will increasingly play in future industry development." A new companion booklet demonstrates the economic impact and advantages of agriculture and food to Alberta.

Both videos can be viewed by contacting any AAFRD district office or the central multi-media library in Edmonton. They are also available for sale from the multi-media library at (403) 422-3951.

Contact: Ken Blackley
(403) 422-3951

Direct seeding demo days

If you'd like to see the latest direct seeding equipment at work, observe direct seeded crops and view relevant demonstration and research plots, plan to attend the 1996 direct seeding demonstration days in Castor, Taber and Red Deer. Over 1,100 people attended last year's events. The demonstrations are again co-sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI).

At Castor on June 11, demonstrations will feature direct seeded plots and the operation of direct seeding equipment. Other features include heavy harrows, herbicide tolerant canola, chem fallow, direct seeding research plots and a static equipment display. Events start at noon. The demo site is 0.5 miles east of Castor, on the north side of highway #12. The event is presented by the county of Paintearth with support from the counties of Flagstaff, Camrose and Stettler. Contact for the event is Michele Buchwitz, (403)882-3211, Castor.

On June 25, the demonstration at Taber will feature direct seeded plots, direct seeding equipment in operation and static equipment displays, direct seeded research plots and a diagnostic field school. In the morning and afternoon, 12 direct seeding drills will be performing. The event begins at 9:30 a.m., 11 miles west of Taber and 1.5 miles north of highway #3, and is presented by the Southern Alberta Conservation Association. For information contact Rob Wauters at (403)381-5119, Lethbridge.

A June 27 plot tour marks the opening of the Red Deer demonstration site. The 110 acre, black soil site features a 40 acre plot comparing direct and conventional seeding. Around these 40 acres are demonstration plots showing direct seeding technology. Openers, fertilizer placement, surface applied granular herbicides, direct seeded forages, seed depth, seeding rates, row spacing, preseed burnoff, Roundup Ready Canola, pocket gopher control and delay haying for wildlife are some of the featured plots. The event starts at 9:30 a.m. with plot tours. There will not be a machinery demonstration, but a static equipment display will be set up. The site is 1 mile west of highway #2 on 32 street (C&E Trail), Red Deer.

The Red Deer site will be set up for self guided tours throughout the summer and fall. This site has been leased for two years, with an option for two more, to get the maximum benefit from the demonstration plots. Information on the Red Deer site is available from Russel Horvey (403)340-5329 or Karen Yakimishyn (403)340-5325.

Additional information on any of the demonstration days can be obtained by calling 1-800-251-6846.

Contact: *Peter Gamache*
(403)427-3361

Follow basic handling and washing rules

Each one of the dozen or so guidelines for handling and washing pesticide contaminated protective clothing and equipment is an important part of the safety equation says an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialist.

"Start by removing the contaminated clothing in the field or at the site, and not at your home. Put the clothing in a disposable plastic bag to take it to be washed. These are ways to reduce exposure to the rest of the family," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate.

"Always protect your hands when you're handling pesticides or pesticide contaminated clothing," she adds. Use unlined nitrile or neoprene gloves.

If the protective clothing is saturated, then don't wash it. Bag it and dispose of it in a landfill.

Another way to cut down on exposure is to clean the tractor steering wheel, its seat and truck seat she notes.

Protective clothing and equipment should be washed daily to minimize exposure.

Always wash the contaminated clothing separately from the rest of the family laundry to avoid transferring residue to other clothing.

"In most cases, it's recommended that you pre-soak the clothing before you wash it. The pre-soak depends on the type of pesticide involved. New research shows different treatments are more effective for specific pesticides," she says.

For example, 2,4-D pesticide formulations can be decontaminated more effectively with an automotive degreaser pre-wash treatment. The commercial laundry treatment *Spray'n Wash*™ is recommended for the insecticide diazinon

A three-hour soak in chlorine bleach and hot water is best for chlorpyrifos, another type of insecticide.

"In most cases hot water is best," says Malyk. Fill your machine to the high water level, use a regular length cycle and use an extra heavy duty detergent as recommended for heavily soiled clothing. Repeat the wash.

When finished, run the empty washer through a full cycle with hot water and detergent.

Hang the clothing to line-dry. "This serves two purposes. It prevents contaminating your dryer and increases chemical breakdown of any pesticide residue," she notes.

Equipment such as hard hat, rubber boots, respirator and goggles should be washed daily with hot soapy water and rinsed. Wash both the inside and outside of gloves. Check for small holes, cracks and discolouration. Replace with a new pair if there are any of these signs of degradation.

"And don't ignore personal hygiene. Washing you is as important as your clothing and equipment," says Malyk.

Shower and shampoo hair after using pesticides. Washing your hands is also very important. Don't eat, drink, smoke or go to the bathroom unless you've washed your hands thoroughly first.

Brochures and a video about protective clothing are available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Low input and organic crops

Consumer demand is increasing the way farmers are looking at low input, or organic, agriculture. To the tune of $8 billion in the U.S. alone, natural food and organic crop production is no longer seen as a fly-by-night, passing fad.

"There's a shortage of organically grown crops, particularly special crops like split peas and dehulled buckwheat," says Gordon Frank, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development crop specialist from Brooks. "The Canadian Wheat Board even buys organic grain through an elevator in Saskatchewan and pays about two times the normal price."

Not just for low input agriculture, organic production principles can apply to all types of crops and can reduce production costs. Learning about and practising crop rotation is also beneficial for soil quality.

"Conferences on low input agriculture are cropping up frequently," says Frank. "Some of the interesting facts and findings are definitely worth taking a second look at whether you're planning to grow a certified organic crop or not."

Cont'd on page 4

Certain crops are allelopathic (inhibit growth of other plants). For example, tall fescue seems to eliminate foxtail barley; downy brome seeds watered with extract from Indian Head lentils will not germinate; oat and barley extract will not allow sclerotia to germinate; and, black medic (legume) grown for 2-3 years in a rotation will drastically reduce wild oats.

"To increase nitrogen and reduce weeds, a plow down legume is needed once every three years," added Frank. "Sweet clover seems to work the best on dry land, alfalfa or a pulse crop on irrigated land. Animal manure as a soil supplement is an excellent addition."

Growing a competitive crop and growing crops together can reduce insects and disease. Only eight per cent of barley in canola can reduce flea beetle numbers by 50 per cent.

Reduced tillage, which goes hand in hand with low input, organic agriculture, increases earthworm populations. A notable reduction in diseases like root rot occurs when earthworms digest infected trash.

Minimizing the use of insecticides and herbicides can dramatically reduce production costs. Non-chemical weed control can be maximized through planned crop rotation, growing competitive species, increasing seeding rate, delaying seeding and placing fertilizer where the crop gets it before the weeds.

Even with all the best management, weeds can still get out of hand. Fortunately when needed, we have access to the safest herbicides ever produced. These products now go on at a few grams per acre and decompose to harmless byproducts that are naturally present.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

Agri-News briefs

Weed seedling guide

Proper weed identification means you can take early and cost effective measures to control them. The new *Weed Seedling Guide* from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will help farmers identify weeds early. The pocket sized, full colour publication contains more than 60 pages of information on 40 broad-leaved weeds and ten grasses. With 49 line drawings of seed-leaf shapes and 50 colour photos of weed seedlings, identifying weeds early is made simpler. You can purchase a copy of the guide for $8 plus GST at all Alberta Agriculture district offices. To order by mail, contact Alberta Agriculture's publication office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6, or order by phone toll-free 1-800-292-5697. For phone or mail orders, add $2 plus GST (per order) for shipping and handling.

Low cost fertilizer

If you have a feedlot or another intensive livestock operation within hauling distance of your farm, don't overlook the option to use manure to offset the rising cost of commercial fertilizer. Manure contains many of the nutrients needed for plant growth and continued use of manure benefits the physical condition of the soil as well. Increased organic matter content, greater water infiltration rate and holding capacity, improved soil structure and tilth, better resistance to wind and water erosion and less soil crusting problems are some of the advantages of fertilizing with manure. The cost of delivery and spreading of manure ranges from about $3 to $5 per ton depending on hauling distance. Manure is an excellent value for your fertilizing dollar, especially for producers that are within five to eight miles of a confined livestock operation. For more information, contact Ross McKenzie, soil fertility research scientist with Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge, (403)381-5126.

Special Crops Market Synopsis

A helpful marketing tool, the Special Crops Market Synopsis, has just arrived. A little late to help with seeding intentions, it is very useful for marketing. The 16 page synopsis lists the full name, address, phone number, crops contracted, prices and marketing options offered by companies that contract or sell special crops. This free publications is available at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices. For more information on the synopsis, contact Gordon Frank, crop specialist in Brooks, at (403)362-1212.

Alberta Pork Congress

The 22nd annual Alberta Pork Congress is being held at the Westerner Park in Red Deer on June 11, 12 and 13, 1996. The event includes an industry trade show, an educational seminar series, consumer events and the 1996 industry awards banquet. Awards being presented this year are: 1996 Progressive Producer Award to Lenz Farms Ltd., Brian or Glen Lenz, Bentley; 1996 Herdsman of the Year Award to Fergus Hand, Partners in Pork Ltd., Rimbey; and, 1996 Pork Industry Leadership Award to Herb Holoboff, Quality Feeds, Lacombe. For more information on the Alberta Pork Congress, contact the Pork Congress office at (403)340-5307.

Alberta Poultry Producers Workshop

Poultry producers registered with Alberta's four feather boards are invited to attend the first annual Alberta Poultry Producers Workshop. The workshop will be held in Red Deer on June 18 - 20, 1996. Concurrent education sessions will be held and participants will have the opportunity to listen to experts in their area of interest. During facilitated case studies, producers will be able to participate in actual problems that have occurred at the farm level. Topics to be discussed in joint sessions include the latest in pest control techniques, how the proposed new Water Conservation and Management Act will effect producers and how to compost mortality and handle manure. For further information on the workshop, contact Rod Chernos, poultry programs coordinator in Airdrie, at (403)948-8533.

1996 Cowboy Poetry Gathering

The *"Gathering of '96"* at the Pincher Creek Agricultural Grounds and Community Hall on June 14-16, 1996, marks the 9th annual 'get-together' of talented cowboy poets, musicians, artists, craftsmen, 'yarn-spinners' and down-to-earth people. The entertainment is non-stop all weekend, whether at the Horseshoe Pavilion, Pincher Creek Community Hall or on the *Calgary Stampede Special Events Stage*. Mule teams and wagons, provided and driven by members of the Heritage Acres Antique Threshing Club, will shuttle the public between venues. Along with the great mix of poetry and music, you can enjoy stock dog trials, a wild-cow-tail session (leg-pulling at its finest), demonstrations of rope making and how to pack a pack-horse, a fashion show and a BBQ & dance. Following a free pancake breakfast, the very popular Cowboy Poet Sunday Service will be the highlight of Sunday morning's events. The weekend concludes with a Rancher's Rodeo where teams of local ranchers compete in 'modern day ranch work' events. Tickets for Friday and Saturday's feature performances and BBQ & dance must be purchased in advance. Daytime passes can be purchased at the gate. The event is produced by the Pincher Creek and District Agricultural Society. For tickets, call (403)627-5855. For more information, contact Bev at (403)628-2115.

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AGRI-NEWS

May 20, 1996

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Cattle – indicators, outlook and market strategy

Issues in the cattle market abound. From controversy over Mad Cow Disease, competition with pork and poultry and burdensome meat supplies, there is lots to discuss.

The upcoming herd liquidation is probably the most important issue to discuss. The timing of the liquidation is what will affect the inevitable downward slide in the cattle cycle.

For most of 1996, the value of slaughter steers and heifers has been identical or heifers priced slightly higher. Even with the demand for lighter weight carcasses, this indicates a competition for females between the breeding herd and the slaughter plant.

"While liquidation hasn't quite started, it is expected to pick up in the last half of 1996," says Doug Walkey, Alberta Agriculture marketing specialist in Lacombe. "Slaughter beef supplies are up over last year and will increase normally on seasonal trends. Finished cattle will hit a seasonal low in mid to late summer, around August."

If producers can find acceptable specifications along with a favourable basis of eight to nine dollars Cdn per cwt, forward contracting may be a consideration. The use of futures and options markets is another option. All indications are that prices will move steadily downward into summer.

High prices for feedgrains seem to be inevitable. The resulting high input costs, along with lower return, due to the softening slaughter market, are pushing feeder cattle prices the wrong way for many producers.

Prices for feeder calves in the spring will be steady and will likely follow the slaughter cattle seasonal trend. Demand for grass calves may also be relatively attractive.

"Prices this fall will be pressured lower by feedgrain prices and the memory of last winter's feedlot losses," adds Walkey. "What this market needs more than anything is a bumper crop of feedgrains, right across North America."

If you don't have access to reasonably priced pasture, you may want to move calves during the grass cattle markets of the spring.

"It is a good alternative to move heifers especially as heifer prices are poised to take the worst beating as liquidation moves in," Walkey says. "Take advantage of an acceptable cull cow market and move heifers while they still hold good value compared to steers."

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development produces a monthly commentary and outlook on livestock, special commodities, wheat, feedgrains and oilseeds. The one-year subscription rate is $30 plus GST. Subscriptions are available by writing market analysis and statistics branch, #302, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Doug Walkey
(403)782-3301

This Week

Cattle – indicators, outlook and market strategy 1

Safety – a key concern this spring 2

Farm Business Management Initiative calls for proposals 2

New Chairman for Agricultural Products Marketing Council 2

Greener grass on your side of the fence 3

Alfalfa grazing, the ups and downs 3

Bursting buds and bugs 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Safety – a key concern this spring

Spring is late this year and that can spell trouble for farmers. Seeding is upper most in the minds of those who want to get on the land and get the seeds in the ground.

"We know farmers are going to hurry, cut corners, take that little extra chance to get their seeding done," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We've already had an increase in fatalities this spring."

One thing that should be kept in mind, as late as it is – it's still spring. Just for a moment, before you get out on the land, stop and remind yourself that working smart is working safe.

"Often, in situations like this, people get into a rushed state of mind," adds Jones. "They are working long hours, trying to hurry, they are tired, unfortunately that's when accidents happen. We've had too many accidents already this year."

This year you may feel like you're in a fight against time but take just a few extra moments to operate farm equipment safely. Have a safe seeding, give nature a chance to progress through the growing season so you can enjoy the harvest later in the year.

"Be safe, work safe, stay safe," says Jones.

Contact: Eric Jones
(403)427-4231

Farm Business Management Initiative calls for proposals

The Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) is once again looking for private sector contractors, government agencies, producer groups and farmer groups to submit proposals for funding.

"This is the fifth year we've put out a call for proposals," says FBMI provincial coordinator Anita Lunden. "We are excited about the program year ahead. A province-wide needs assessment was just completed to make sure that planned activities are presented in a suitable way and are what farmers want."

The current agreement is for three years. That means that project leaders can submit long term projects involving several learning activities over a number of years.

"Our national council has identified four priorities for the program," adds Lunden. "They include managing change and management mindset; technology and information transfer; marketing; and, environmental and social issues. All the activities we fund will fit into one of these four program priorities."

The way information is presented will be shifting over the next three years. In the past, emphasis was placed on classroom course delivery. The program will now move into more one-on-one delivery and distance delivery, including CD Rom, Internet and video conferencing. While classroom programming will continue, several learning opportunities will be integrated.

Research is also a component of FBMI funding. Research projects and projects to develop materials for distance information delivery are welcome.

The deadline for private sector firms and government agencies to submit a call for proposals is June 10, 1996. In order to promote farmer groups submitting proposals for producer driven activities, funds have been set aside and they can apply until October 30, 1996.

More information and forms for proposals are available from FBMI provincial coordinator, Anita Lunden in Olds.

Contact: Anita Lunden
(403)556-4240

New Chairman for Agricultural Products Marketing Council

Frank Fallwell of Calgary is the new Chairman of the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council. Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD) Minister Walter Paszkowski announced the appointments of Mr. Fallwell, a new Vice Chairman and three new Council members today.

Mr. Fallwell replaces Harvey Buckley who retired last month. Fallwell is the President of Billingsgate Fish Company, former President of the Alberta Food Processors Association and has been an active member of the Marketing Council for five years.

Harry Schudlo, a grain producer from Sexsmith, has taken over as Vice Chairman. Schudlo has served on a number of councils and boards in the Peace Region, and played a significant role in establishing the Marketing Council's grain-related commissions.

Three new members have also been appointed to the Marketing Council. Rodney M. Bradshaw of Innisfail, a former Chairman of the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board, is involved in various aspects of the agriculture industry. James William (Bill) Lawton, is active in the cattle industry and owns and operates feed lots in the Niton Junction area. John Knapp, AFRD's new representative on the Council, is the Regional Director for Barrhead.

"I am very pleased with the calibre of the new members, the Vice Chairman and the Chairman," said Mr. Paszkowski. "They all have extensive backgrounds in agriculture and a history of valuable contributions to their communities. AFRD and the

Cont'd on page 3

Marketing Council are fortunate to have such capable people in these roles."

The Marketing Council works with 16 boards and commissions established under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act.

Contact: Brian Rhiness
(403) 427-2164

Greener grass on your side of the fence

It was a tough winter for livestock owners. The snow and cold weather that started in November seemed to hang on forever. Feed inventories have been lowered considerably and most livestock producers are running low and facing higher feed prices.

Hay and pasture land will be in shorter supply this spring as greater livestock numbers compete with cereal crops for available land.

"It's more important than ever to get more out of what pasture you have," says Grant Lastiwka, Alberta Agriculture forage specialist in Rimbey. "With what is happening this spring, and what could happen in the beef industry over the next couple of years, beef producers have some important decisions to make about their pasture land."

Healthy, highly productive pastures take time to monitor and manage. Understanding grass growth so that forage is plentiful and handling it wisely by managing cattle herds are important to maintaining pastures which cut the cost of cattle production.

One option often considered is fertilizing pastures to increase forage productivity. While fertilizing will be expensive this year, the purchase of feed for animals is also going to be expensive. The cost of fertilizer might well reduce overall costs to the cattle operation. Splitting the nitrogen application will spread out the grazing season and be a sounder economical decision than just a single application.

"It has been estimated that carefully managed pastures could yield 20 to 40 per cent more grass," adds Lastiwka. "If animal numbers are flexible, you can get up to 60 to 80 per cent more animal production from that grass. As you get extra pasture productivity the cost for cow-calf unit drops."

For every extra day a cow grazes, there is close to a 50 per cent daily savings in feed costs compared to feeding high cost, stored feed. With the trend in the near future for lower cattle prices and potentially higher winter feed costs, getting extra productivity from pastures is even more important. Spending some extra time managing pasture land can mean a more profitable cattle operation in the long term.

Additional information is available by calling Grant Lastiwka or Lorne Erickson, toll free, at 1-800-785-6546.

Contact: Grant Lastiwka
(403)843-2201
Government numbers are toll-free-dial 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator

Alfalfa grazing, the ups and downs

It is possible to achieve rates of gain on pasture close to rates obtained in the feedlot by grazing higher quality alfalfa pastures. Gaining more weight on pasture and reducing the time spent in the feedlot, reduces the overall cost of bringing beef to market.

Season-long gains average 1.5 to 2.5 pounds/head/day on grass pastures. Agriculture Canada research showed gains in excess of three pounds/head/day over the season on intensively grazed pastures containing alfalfa. This can amount to 300-450 pounds over a full grazing season.

How the animals were overwintered is a factor in overall gain as there can be an initial weight loss when animals are turned out to pasture.

"To optimize animal performance, grass cattle should be purchased in lean condition, vaccinated against clostridial diseases such as blackleg, treated for internal and external parasites, and implanted with growth implant," says Patrick Ramsey, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development beef specialist in High River. "Ranchers also need to check cattle regularly for pinkeye and footrot and treat any cases immediately."

Grazing pastures with more than 25 per cent alfalfa does require effective bloat prevention strategies.

While the use of the recently released Rumensin controlled release capsule (CRC) takes some of the worry out of grazing alfalfa, producers should still use sound alfalfa grazing management practices. These include:

- increased observation, at least twice a day to detect signs of bloat early;
- allow alfalfa to get to the bud stage before turning cattle on the pasture;
- provide free choice straw or hay for more fibre to slow down fermentation in the rumen;
- use strip grazing or high intensity rotational grazing so animals eat the whole plant;
- move cattle on to dry pasture in the afternoon when they are already full;
- identify and remove chronic bloaters from the pasture;
- rotate to other pastures when the bloat risk is extremely high; and

Cont'd on page 4

- when grazing fall regrowth, use precaution until the leaves have turned brown.

"Pasture systems can have a cost per pound of gain of about $.30 compared to about $.80 in the feedlot," adds Ramsey. "Alfalfa pastures out-produce grass pastures by about two-fold due to deeper root systems, faster regrowth and nitrogen fixing ability. This results in increased carrying capacity and stocking rates. A little extra monitoring and care of the herd is needed, but can be worth the time spent."

Contact: Patrick Ramsey
(403)652-8306

Bursting buds and bugs

Spring is in the air, buds are bursting forth and the healthy shrubs promise an abundance of fruit and berries.

Nothing is more frustrating than expecting a bumper crop of gooseberries or currants and finding the fruit infested with worms and falling prematurely from the bush.

Currant fruit flies! They spend the winter under the host plant as pupae, emerge as an adult fly about flowering time and then lay eggs, singly in the developing fruit. The maggot then feeds on the fruit and just when you are ready to harvest, the maggots drop to the ground, fruit and all.

"Controlling these pests needs to be done before they lay eggs into the fruit," says Shelley Barkley, information officer with Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre, South. "Raking fallen leaves from under the bush is one method of control. Spraying with malathion just after petal fall and a second spray 10 days later also gives control."

Another pest of currant and gooseberry is the imported currantworm, a caterpillar-like animal which completely defoliates plants in a few days. As immature larvae, they are yellowish-green with black spots, when mature, they are uniformly green. When disturbed, the larvae will raise the front and rear ends of their bodies. They can appear twice a year, in late May and early June and again in late June or July. Spotting them is the hardest part of control since they begin feeding on the inside of the bush and work outward. Hand picking is one option for control. Spraying with diazinon or malathion, insecticidal soap solutions or rotenone dust can be used if you find the insect in bushes.

The currant aphid causes red and yellow puffy blisters to form on the upper leaf surface. The plants lose vigour and if the attack is severe, the leaves can fall off. The fruit may be covered with a sticky substance called honey dew. If this was a problem on currants and gooseberries last year, apply chemicals before the plants begin to flower this year.

In June, if parts of the new tender needles of spruce start to disappear, the culprit may be the yellow headed spruce sawfly. As the pest grows so does its appetite and whole needles are eaten. The tree will look shabby and yellowish brown. Newly hatched, it is caterpillar-like, yellowish-green with either a yellow, red or green head. Mature insects are two centimetres long with a yellow or red head. The waxy looking body is green with grey-green stripes running from head to tail. This insect looks a lot like the needles so seeing it is the hardest part of control. Hand picking is an option and hosing the larva with water can be effective. Chemical control options include diazinon or Sevin.

The birch leaf miner adult lays eggs between the leaf surfaces. The eggs hatch into a larva which eats the green out of the leaf. To add insult to injury, these spots turn brown and look quite ugly. The damage remains on the tree for the entire growing season. To control these pests, a soil drench with dimethoate gives the longest control. In May, when the leaves are fully open is the time to treat the tree. Apply the product according to the label. Water the tree well after applying the chemical. Soil drenches may not be effective on newly transplanted birches where the root system isn't well established.

"Other insects to watch for in the spring are the boxelder bug, ground beetles and strawberry root weevils. These insects are migrating this time of year and they can wander right into homes," adds Barkley. Sweeping them up and disposing of them is the best method of control. Most of the time they are only problems for a short time in the spring and fall, so there is light at the end of the tunnel.

For more information on insects, plant diseases and control, the *Backyard Pest Management in Alberta* guide is available for $5, plus GST, from all Alberta Agriculture district offices and the publishing branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. Call toll free 1-800-292-5697. Add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Check your grain storage

Probably the last thing on your mind right now is checking grain storage. Some areas of Alberta had slow grain movement through the winter and some producers are holding more grain than usual in hopes of higher prices. Holding grain in storage is risky business. You may want to talk to an agriculture marketing specialist about how to sell your grain and still participate in future grain price increases. If you choose to store grain, taking a few minutes to monitor its condition is recommended as spoilage caused by insects can reduce returns to disastrous levels. For insect problems, there is a new product on the market. The product is not a chemical pesticide. It is an odourless, non-staining powder derived from salt water diatomaceous earth. With consumer resistance to insecticides and fumigation treatments increasing, this product is an alternative. Some Canadian flour millers are not willing to buy grain treated with insecticides in storage, but they will accept, and even recommend, the use of this product called 'Insecto'. For more information, contact Gordon Frank, Alberta Agriculture crops specialist in Brooks at (403)362-1212.

Springtime menu choices

With summer just around the corner, many people want to spend less time in the kitchen and more time outdoors. During the warmer months, many prefer to eat lighter meals as well. The Alberta Turkey Board has put together a helpful publication called Salad Sensations with Alberta Turkey, that presents some quick and easy meal ideas that can be a side dish or a main course. The brochure is available at no charge and can be ordered by writing to Salad Sensations, Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, #212, 8711 - 50 Street, Edmonton, T6B 1E7. For further information, contact Janice Shields at (403)465-5755 in Edmonton.

Alberta Beef Congress

Alberta's annual salute to cow/calf producers is being held on June 19 and 20, 1996. The trade show and live animal competition will be held at the Westerner Park in Red Deer. There is a strong education program and live animal show associated with the event. For more information, contact Patrick Kennedy of the Alberta Beef Congress at (403)347-4491 in Red Deer.

New executive officers for Alberta Foundation for Animal Care

New executive officers were chosen to head up the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC). Peter Schuld, a dairy and beef producer from Ironsprings, was elected chairman. Schuld represents the dairy industry on AFAC and is a former chairman of the Alberta Mild Producers Society. David Blackwood, a turkey producer from Wetaskiwin, was elected vice-chairman. Blackwood is also a director of the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board. Dan Sych, an elk rancher in Hay Lakes, is executive director. Sych is past president of the Alberta Venison Council. Also at the annual meeting of the AFAC, Alan Bergen, DVM, was elected as director at large. The AFAC board has 13 directors representing the 11 founding members and two directors at large. The organization has active membership from 20 agricultural organizations. For more information, contact Susan Kitchen, AFAC manager at (403)777-0445 or Peter Schuld, AFAC chairman at (403)738-4439.

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AGRI-NEWS

May 27, 1996

Controlling algae in dugouts

A common problem for dugout owners is controlling algae in the water supply. Chemicals are available on the market, and they are effective control methods. If you're willing to start using control measures before the algae is blooming you may want to give barley straw a try.

Research done in Alberta indicates that barley straw may be an effective algae control in dugouts. British research shows the growth of filamentous and unicellular algae can be inhibited by the presence of decomposing barley straw in water.

"There are two reasons why barley straw affects the growth of algae," says Orin R. Kenzie, Alberta Agriculture engineering technologist in Lethbridge. "It seems the rotting straw produces an algicide as it decomposes. The other school of thought is the microbes breaking down the barley straw use phosphorous for a food supply, reducing its availability for algae growth.

One procedure used in dugouts is to cut the top off a 45 gallon polythene barrel and drill as many one inch holes in the sides as possible. Fill the barrel with barley straw. A weight in the barrel of 30-40 pounds will keep it submerged. Tie a rope to the barrel and attach a floating device so the barrel can be recovered. Straw in the barrel may have to be replaced two or three times during the summer.

"Barley straw should be put out early in the spring to prevent excessive algae growth," adds Kenzie. "A massive algae bloom, seen later in the season will require bluestone and/or lime to get the situation under control. You may want to follow chemical treatment with barley straw to keep the algae growth down."

Remember, if you are treating a dugout with copper sulphate (bluestone), follow all handling and application instructions.

Copper sulphate is toxic to fish. Be extremely careful if your dugout is stocked. The treatment rapidly depletes dissolved oxygen in the water. If you are using copper sulphate, you may want to treat one-third of the dugout at a time and space the treatments one day apart.

"Algae is a never ending battle in dugouts," says Kenzie. "Having a natural, fairly simple alternative may be worth a try. To date, I have not had confirmation of its use in dugouts used for human consumption."

Contact: Orin R. Kenzie
(403)381-5130

Wheat, feedgrains and oilseed market outlook

The wheat outlook has changed considerably in the last month. Since the U.S. winter wheat crop has left dormancy, the extent of damage from the past winter's dryness and freezing conditions is being realized. The crop was rated 45 per cent in poor or worse condition. Last year, only 13 per cent of the crop was rated this badly.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Controlling algae in dugouts 1
Wheat, feedgrains and oilseed market outlook 1
Measuring water erosion 2
April weather near normal 2
4-H Foundation: the beginning 3
Briefs 3

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

"The likelihood of an average sized winter wheat crop is very low," says Al Dooley, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Combined with flooding in the northern plains which will likely delay seeding and what may be the smallest wheat carryover at the end of 1995-96 since the late 1940's, prices will only get higher."

Information from the United Grain Growers Seeding Intentions Report indicates an increase in Canadian wheat area of 13 per cent and a rise in durum area of eight per cent. It is expected that wheat production worldwide will increase this season and that the premium for durum wheat over CW red spring wheat will disappear.

"Feedgrain futures shot higher this month with corn leading the way," says Dooley. "Corn futures have hit new record highs this past month. A downward revision to anticipated U.S. corn carryover stocks to below 400 million bushels in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) April crop report added fuel to the fire."

The barley market is not as tight but barley futures reluctantly followed the corn market higher.

"Due to the high corn futures prices, corn seedings may exceed 81 million acres," adds Dooley. "With higher acres and average yields the market would remain relatively tight. While still attractive, corn and other feedgrain prices will likely be lower next year."

There are indications that a 29 per cent drop in western Canadian canola area could be seen this spring. Flax area is forecast to fall more moderately, by five per cent.

"Canola and flaxseed have strengthened along with the soy complex," says Dooley. "The strength is mainly due to other markets. The competition for acreage, concerns about BSE causing some shift to vegetable meals and soybean stocks also being tight, are all reasons behind the strength in oilseeds."

Barring problem weather here in western Canada, no surprises in seeding of canola are anticipated.

"Old crop sales should continue and it may be advisable to consider sales of up to 20 to 30 per cent of new crop canola," concludes Dooley. "New crop prices should be attractive and likely at or higher than current bids. However, due to the volatile nature of the market, canola option premiums will tend to be inflated."

Contact: Al Dooley
(403)427-5386

Measuring water erosion

If you see grown-ups intently watching water rushing down a muddy channel, they aren't playing, more likely they are measuring erosion. Measuring erosion in the small channels, called rills, helps calculate an erodibility factor used in a computer water erosion model.

"Computer modelling can be a fast, cost-effective way to assess water erosion potential," says project leader Douwe Vanderwel, an Alberta Agriculture soil conservation engineer. "These models enable agriculturalists to choose an effective erosion control strategy and that helps farmers. Modelling also assists in predicting off-site impacts of water management systems, estimate potential effects of forestry activities or determine the soil erosion status of a district or region."

Most water erosion prediction models were developed in the U.S., they are not designed for Alberta's climate, crops and soils. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch is working with the University of Alberta and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to collect data needed to test the U.S. models and make adjustments for use in Alberta.

"To date, erodibility has been measured at five sites – Breton, Edmonton, Lacombe, Tofield and Wetaskiwin," adds Vanderwel. "The team plans to collect data at about 20 more sites to characterize a wide variety of soil types and textures within the major soil groups found in Alberta. That data will provide a sound basis for using water erosion models in the province."

Information gathered will help in identifying erosion-prone soil types, improving water erosion risk maps, planning routes for roads or pipelines, siting forestry operations, and enhancing geographic information systems (GIS) applications. "Once we have erodibility data, it can be added to other data on soil attributes, such as soil texture and slope, in a landscape database," says Vanderwel. "That database, when integrated with an agricultural production database will give us a powerful tool for understanding and managing rural environments."

The soil erodibility research team is also conducting detailed erosion studies on three agricultural drainage basins at Breton, Tofield and Lacombe. A fourth site is planned for the Peace region.

Contact: Douwe Vanderwel
(403)422-4385

April weather near normal

April is usually a transition month from winter to spring, however the change in seasons does not always go as expected.

"The month started with cold temperatures and remained generally cool in the north and warm in the south for the first nine days of the month," says Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch. "Warm Pacific air returned around mid-April along with moisture. Near normal temperatures were reported the second half of April."

Cont'd on page 3

Average monthly temperature for April was 4.7 degrees C, an average temperature 0.7 degrees above normal compared to the long term average of 4.0 degrees. Averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Most Alberta locations reported temperatures up to two degrees above normal. Vauxhall and Highvale reported the greatest monthly temperature departure of all the stations at 2.2 degrees warmer than normal. Normal temperatures for April are 5.3 and 4.3 degrees respectively.

"April is usually the sixth wettest month of the year," adds Dzikowski. "This year, total April precipitation in Alberta was three per cent above normal, which is only 0.7 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 26.9 mm."

The wettest area in Alberta was the north west region with amounts of 20 to 60 mm, or 80 to 280 per cent of normal. Most other locations reported near normal precipitation totals, although amounts varied from seven to 60 mm, or 20 to 280 per cent of normal.

Esther and Bow Island reported the driest precipitation totals during April. Esther 7.0 mm or 40 per cent of normal. Bow Island reported 7.0 mm or 23 per cent of normal.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

4-H Foundation: The Beginning

Many times the question is asked, "What is the 4-H Foundation of Alberta and what does it do for 4-H?"

In 1977, 4-H had a dream to develop a permanent facility for 4-H members and leaders. The 4-H Foundation of Alberta was established by the Alberta 4-H Council to turn that dream into reality. With countless hours of hard work from dedicated volunteers and financial support from many 4-H friends, the Alberta 4-H Centre on Battle Lake, was soon in operation Numerous campaigns were launched and 4-H rallied whole heartedly to support each cause with their spare pennies, dimes, quarters and dollars.

"Over the years, the foundation developed and operated the Alberta 4-H Centre, but its mandate broadened," says Jerry Hall, chairman of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "Administering scholarships, handling bequests and securing funds to ensure the future of 4-H, are also important activities of the foundation."

Thousands of 4-H campers have graced the halls of the 4-H Centre or received a 4-H scholarship through the foundation. From that first day in 1977, the foundation has provided this opportunity by accepting and managing resources wisely.

"There are many challenges facing 4-H in the years ahead," adds Hall. "As the Alberta 4-H Centre ages and cost of education skyrockets, 4-H relies on all of us to do our part. The donated pennies, dimes and quarters are just as important today as they were in the early years."

Their goal is simple. Help 4-H raise funds which can be used where needed most within the 4-H program. Financial contributions will enable the 4-H Foundation of Alberta to supply resources for 4-H now and in the future.

It's easy to contribute. Just send your donation to the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, Box 550, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2K8.

"The foundation, on behalf of 4-H, expresses sincere thanks to the many friends of 4-H who have shown their support over the years," says Hall. "Your support is vital to ensure 4-H continues to be one of the premiere youth organizations in the world."

The Alberta 4-H Council, 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the 4-H Foundation of Alberta will continue to strive for excellence and quality in the 4-H program.

Contact: Vicki Berger
(403)427-2541

Agri-News Briefs

Castor direct seeding demo day rescheduled

The Castor direct seeding demo day, originally scheduled for June 11, has been rescheduled to July 11. Adverse weather in May has delayed seeding in the area and changing the event to July 11 will allow more farmers to attend. The schedule remains the same with events getting underway at 12:00 noon. For more information, contact Michele Buchwitz at (403)882-3211.

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Controlling Dandelions

Dandelions have become an increasing weed problem, especially in no-till systems that rely solely on pre-seeding burnoff and in-crop herbicide treatments. Perennial weeds, dandelions have a deep tap root and are relatively easy to kill with tillage. They are difficult to kill with herbicides, especially when well established. Results of a study done on dandelion control, by Doug Derksen at the Saskatchewan Indian Head Experimental Farm, found that after just one season of pre-harvest Roundup application, dandelion control was greater than 95 per cent. Generally, the high-input rotations had better control ratings than the low-input rotations with the difference between the rotations increasing with time. Three seasons after treatment, dandelion control was greater than 75 per cent in the high-input rotations, but the level dropped below 5- per cent in the low-input treatments. Crop rotation, pre-harvest glyphosate (Roundup), post-harvest, 2,4-D and the use of herbicides that suppress dandelions within the crop are important components of an integrated system for dandelions. For further information, contact Shaffeek Ali at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)422-4909.

Agriculture and employment in Alberta

In Alberta, agriculture is one of our top three industries. The benefits from agriculture include both direct and indirect jobs in agriculture and agri-food businesses. Some interesting statistics were released in March, 1996, in the Status of Agriculture in Alberta 1995 Highlights.

- Alberta's agri-food sector was the third largest employer in the province in 1995, with 113,400 workers;
- 8.3 per cent of the total provincial workforce were employed in agri-food industries;
- compared to 1994, 16,400 new agri-food jobs were created, the largest gain in the number of jobs among major industries in Alberta;
- Alberta's primary agriculture industry continues to maintain the lowest unemployment rate among major industries in the province. The rate dropped to 1.6 per cent in 1995, the lowest recorded in the last decade.

For further information, contact Alberta Agriculture market analysis and statistics branch at (403)427-4011.

Planning an event – who you gonna call?

Planning can be a chore under certain conditions. Unrealistic timelines and a haphazard approach to planning puts a damper on the whole experience. By taking an organized, step-by-step approach it is possible to get the job done. If you're starting the process from scratch, *A Working Guide to Planning an Event* can be the precision tool your organization needs. The booklet is designed to help you effectively manage and organize information related to any event being planned. In the guide you'll find worksheets where details can be noted and kept as a reference. There is an 'Establishing a Timeline' form to help you prioritize all the jobs that need to be done and an 'Event Outline' form to help you identify key points such as purpose, target audience, suggested topics/program and the date(s). For coordinating times and activities, a simple outline called 'Planning a Program' will keep you on track. *A Working Guide to Planning an Event* is available free at your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office. For more information, contact Cindy Bishop, organizational development specialist at (403)986-8985 in Leduc.

Farm Operations Cost Guide

The *1996 Farm Operations Cost Guide* is now available. The publication includes annual survey information on custom rates. Custom rates quoted may not suit all custom operators but can be used as a guide when calculating costs. A new feature for 1996 is a listing of prices for some common farm inputs. Prices quoted are collected throughout the year by Wild Rose Ag Producers and the Market Analysis and Statistics Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The third section of the guide is a farm machinery cost guide, which provides information on the cost of owning and operating farm machinery. Worksheets and examples of farm machinery cost calculations are also included in the guide. The 1996 Farm Operations Cost Guide can be purchased at all Alberta Agriculture district offices for $5 plus GST. It can also be ordered from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development publications office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697. Please add $2 plus GST for postage and handling. For further information, contact Lorne Erickson at (403)843-2201.

AGRI-NEWS
June 3, 1996

Preventing Dutch Elm Disease

The fungus that causes Dutch Elm Disease (DED) has not been found in Alberta. The elm bark beetle which can carry the disease has been found in a number of locations in Alberta.

"It is important to prevent the spread of the elm bark beetle to protect the population of majestic elm trees in Alberta," says Janet Feddes-Calpas, Dutch elm disease technician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The elm bark beetle breeds in dead and dying wood which means pruning is necessary to eliminate breeding sites in American elm, Siberian elm and Japanese elm."

Preventative pruning of dead branches from healthy elm trees must be done between September 30 and April 1, when the elm bark beetles are not active. The sap of elm trees pruned during the spring and summer will attract the beetles. Wood removed during pruning should be burned or buried (to a depth of 30 cm) immediately, as stored wood can provide a breeding site for the beetles. Elm tree stumps must be removed or the stump should be ground to 10 cm below the soil surface and the resulting hole filled with soil.

From April 1 to September 30, elm trees should be pruned or removed only if **absolutely necessary** for safety reasons. During this time extra care and caution should be taken to ensure all the wood is burned or buried immediately.

"DED has killed millions of American elm trees throughout North America, Europe and Asia. It has caused much damage in Manitoba and has been found in many areas in southeastern Saskatchewan," adds Feddes-Calpas. "Early symptoms usually appear in June and July. Leaves will suddenly wilt, droop and curl. The leaves then turn brown and usually remain on the tree. If the tree is infected later in the summer, the leaves will droop, turn yellow and drop prematurely. If you see any of these symptoms, please call the DED Hotline."

Albertans are asked not to transport elm wood for use as firewood, as it may be carrying elm bark beetles into the province. Elm wood collection containers are located at the Alberta-Saskatchewan and Alberta-Montana borders.

Contact: Janet Feddes-Calpas
DED Hotline
(403)362-3391
(toll-free by dialing a RITE operator at 310-0000 and asking for 362-3391)

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Preventing Dutch Elm Disease 1
1996 Alberta Beef Congress 2
20th annual Alberta 4-H Beef Heifer Show 2
Change of course necessary for value-added prosperity 3
Selling to restaurants 3
Developing your food business 4
Working with the rules and regulations of food processing 4
Briefs 5
Coming Events Listing 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

1996 Alberta Beef Congress

Amidst the fun, futurity contest, jackpot draw and heifer show that are part of Alberta's annual salute to the commercial cow/calf producer, the 1996 Alberta Beef Congress features a two day educational seminar.

"We have lined up some excellent speakers for this year's program," says Ken Ziegler, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We wanted to cover the topics that are on the minds of most ranchers, so we have sessions on everything from gophers to pasture production to grading beef."

The seminar begins at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 19 as Dr. Gilbert Proulx, wildlife biologist, asks the question, "Who's winning, us or them?" This is a half hour session on gopher research – breakthroughs and roadblocks.

At 11:00 a.m., Jim Stone, a rotational pasture specialist, speaks on electric fencing. After lunch, at 12:30 until 2:00 p.m., Dr. Jane King, forage agronomist, and Jim Bauer, of Grassland Agriculture Consulting, discuss pastures, how to manage them for profit and what you need to understand about grass.

On Wednesday evening, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., Jack Olson, Don Halladay and Lorne Erickson will share their opinions with the audience in a 'bear pit session' entitled 'The beef cow and the bottom line in the 21st century'. This session is being hailed as a great way to learn what others see coming up in the cattle industry. Be prepared to hear their opinions, and share your own.

An awards banquet, recognizing nominated individuals who have contributed to the forage and beef industry, will be held after the bear pit session.

On Thursday morning, at 10:00 a.m., Chris Jenson D.V.M. will share his expertise on selecting a bull that will produce functional productive offspring in a session called 'Picking Bulls to pay the Bills'.

At 11:00 a.m., Lee Friesen, a cattle buyer from Cargill Foods, and Richard Pochylko, independent feedlot operator and feeder cattle buyer from Erskine, will explain their methods for buying cattle.

"The seminar program wraps up on Thursday afternoon with a session on evaluating and getting the best price for cattle," adds Ziegler. "Charlie Gracey, the man who created the new Canadian Beef Grading Agency, heads the session – Are you getting what you steer is worth? Gracey has been in the beef industry for 25 years and is a real authority on this subject."

The Congress also includes a commercial and purebred replacement heifer show. For more information about the 1996 Alberta Beef Congress, contact your local agriculture office. Complete scheduling information is available.

Contact: Ken Ziegler
(403)845-8200

20th annual Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show

All 4-H beef club project members in good standing in their club are eligible to enter the provincial beef heifer show. This open event will be held on July 14 - 16, 1996 at the Bashaw Agricultural Society Grounds, Bashaw, Alberta.

"The beef heifer show has grown remarkably in the last five years," says Henry Wiegman, 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We have more than doubled the number of participants in the last few years. Last year we had almost 300 delegates from throughout the province, up from 120 kids in 1990. For the 1995 show, we received entries from all over the province, from Peace River to Milk River, which is very encouraging."

Activities include judging, team grooming, breed classes, interbreed conformation, herdsmanship competition, project bowl contest, showmanship, freshman classes, and information sessions.

"The 4-H beef heifer show is a provincial level event that provides an educational opportunity for 4-H beef members to broaden their knowledge of showing, fitting and judging beef cattle," adds Wiegman. "It is a great way for members to share ideas, gain experience and socialize with members from different areas of the province."

Entries and the $15 entry fee must be received at the provincial 4-H office by June 15, 1996. The entry form automatically enters the delegate in showmanship, judging and applicable freshman classes. Grooming teams and project bowl teams can be signed up by clubs when they arrive on Sunday.

Since this is the 20th anniversary of the show, commemorative t-shirts can be pre-ordered. The t-shirts are $10 each. Delegates who want to order one can add $10 to their registration fee cheque.

"The program patrons for the beef heifer show are the United Farmers of Alberta; Alberta Treasury Branches; Bashaw Agriculture Society; and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development," says Wiegman. "The 4-H and all 4-H beef club project members appreciate the help received from these sponsors and extend a grateful thank you for their support."

Entries should be sent to Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show, Home Economics and 4-H Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street NW Rm. 200, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(403)422-4444

Change of course necessary for value-added prosperity

"Unless the Alberta agri-food and fibre sector embarks on a different strategy from what is currently in place, it runs the risk of falling behind as a supplier of value-added products," says a study titled *Changing Course! – Value-Added Agri-Food & Fibre Strategy for Alberta*, commissioned by Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD).

"The *Changing Course* consultant's report supports this Ministry's goals for growth of value-added production for Alberta's agriculture sector," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"To achieve the market opportunity of $20 billion shipments per year of value-added food and fibre products within 10 years, the agri-food industry's strategy must firmly aim at meeting consumer demands," said Mr. Paszkowski.

"World markets for value-added, consumer-ready products are growing rapidly, while sales of bulk commodities have been static. Many of the strategies and structures currently governing the Alberta agriculture scene are commodity-focused, as the consultants' study points out," said Mr. Paszkowski, "and are not directed to further development of value-added food and non-food products."

The study, conducted by Toma & Bouma and the George Morris Centre, says the Alberta sector lacks sufficient research and product development, management and technical skills in people, marketing capability, and capital. Marketing systems are seen to limit the development of value-added food and fibre products, specifically dairy, poultry, pork and cereals, states the report.

Mr. Paszkowski said, "The agri-food sector, together with the Province, has the drive and the will power to overcome all the limiting factors mentioned in the strategy report. The strategies recommended are worthy of study and action to boost Alberta producers and processors to achieve their potential in the world market."

The report states that without change, the Alberta agri-food and fibre sector faces increased competition and could experience decreases in the total value of processed food and beverage shipments, which currently stands at $5.65 billion. The study recommends strong research and development, attention to the market, development of commodities that meet very specific consumer requirements (niches), and formation of strategic supply chain alliances.

"I have been saying to all the links in the chain that we now must focus on the consumer – to grow what we can sell, not just try to sell what we grow." Mr. Paszkowski said.

He urges everyone in the industry and those interested in economic development to read the study and give him their opinions. To obtain a copy of the *Changing Course* report, contact AFRD Industry Development at 427-7366

Contact: Ron Glen or Brian Hlus   Lou Normand
(403) 427-2137   (403) 427-7366

Selling to restaurants

Many restaurants buy directly from growers for a variety of reasons. Reasonable price, fresh quality produce, specialty produce, and reliability of supply and delivery, are some of the reasons.

"Restaurants are listed in the yellow pages; farmers aren't," says Karen Goad, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It really is up to farmers to contact their local restaurants if they have salable product. Many chefs welcome calls that give them access to new products."

When considering restaurants as a market throughout the growing season, farmers need to weigh the advantages and the disadvantages. A steady demand for produce and personal contact with owners which can allow for greater flexibility in products grown are definite pluses. Restaurants generally have limited cooler space, so frequent deliveries may be needed, that means more paperwork and more time.

"Concentrating on specialty items that aren't available locally or on items you can offer at premium freshness and quality give local farmers an advantage," adds Goad. "Keep in touch with restaurant buyers so they can plan ahead and you can market your crops when harvested. Saskatoons, fiddleheads, spices, herbs, specialty mushrooms, native fruits and specialty vegetables all have potential in the Alberta restaurant trade."

To begin researching your market you may want to check the yellow pages, consult restaurant guides in newspapers, contact provincial and national restaurant associations, and attend food trade shows. Look especially for restaurants that feature natural foods, regional specialities, home style cooking or unique cuisine. Make a list of all the restaurants that can be easily served from your location.

"It is good to line up prospective restaurant buyers a year in advance," says Goad. "Find out if they buy locally, what crops interest them, quantities used per week, ordering frequency, payment terms, packaging preferred, grading, delivery and other requirements."

Expanding your market should be approached the same as any other business venture. Good research and advance planning are important steps to making it a success. For further information, Karen Goad can be reached at her Grande Prairie office by calling the toll free government RITE number 310-000 and asking for 538-5285.

Contact: Karen Goad
(403)538-5285

Developing your food business

Developing a home or farm based business, selling at Farmer's Markets, or just having a processing idea, require advance planning.

"Make sure your product is unique and can fill a niche in the market," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Set short and long term goals for your company and then take the time to develop a marketing plan to achieve these goals. Study consumer trends and be innovative and flexible so you can respond to changing customer demands."

The first thing the consumer sees on the store shelf is the packaging. Make your product appealing. Many specialty food items are used for gifts, decorations in kitchens and dining rooms. Remember, the consumer looks for tamper resistant packaging.

The labelling on your product is often your only way of communicating to the consumer. It must meet requirements outlined by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The challenge then is to create a design that instantly attracts attention and conveys the integrity of the product and the manufacturer. If the product warrants, include instructions on how-to-use and handle the product. Nutritional analysis information on the label may also be advantageous. All products should have a Universal Product Code (UPC) that scans correctly. This is generally a must to be accepted by stores.

"You may want to test your label," adds Lencucha. "Take it to a store and compare it to other products on the shelf. Ask others if it stands out and if all the pertinent information is clear."

Probably the hardest step for the new entrepreneur is pricing. Check out the competition to get a 'ballpark' idea on price. Make sure all your fixed and variable costs are covered, including distributor, broker, retail, promotions and advertising.

Remember, we should grow/produce what we can sell rather than trying to sell what we can grow/make.

Additional information on starting a food processing business is available from business development specialists, agri-food development consultants, and industry development branch.

Resources you may wish to request include a series of four fact sheets on market research: Agdex #848-1 - *The Basics*; #848-2 - *The How To*; #848-3 - *When you need to hire a professional*; and #848-4 - *Help and where to find it*. The fact sheets are available from Alberta Agriculture's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

There is also an excellent new publication which can be purchased from Alberta Food Processors Association (403-444-2272) for $65 entitled *Food Processors Reference Manual*.

Contact: Joyce Lencucha at (403)340-5358
Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Working with the rules and regulations of food processing

Some of the challenges involved in diversification and value-added food processing are identifying and accommodating the rules and regulations that affect your business. They can be found at every level of government, municipal, provincial and federal.

"Regulations for food processing enterprises aren't always simple," says Kerry Engel, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Regulations are different for different types of business, different markets and different scales of operation. You may need a business licence, home occupation permit or development permit from your municipality, for starters."

Local boards of health regulate the manufacturing, processing, storage, sale and distribution of products for human consumption within Alberta. Provincially, there are the Meat Inspection Act and the Dairy Act. Federal agencies handle fish products, packaging, labelling, and meat inspection for export.

"My theory is work with them, not against them and avoid unpleasant surprises," adds Engel. "As consumers we want regulations in place to protect us when we make purchases in the market place."

The regulatory agencies can provide a wealth of valuable advice on aspects of a business you're investigating. Contact the necessary regulatory offices far enough in advance. Get regulations in writing and a contact name and number for follow up.

Asking for information and ideas, being well prepared and being persistent is all part of developing your business. More information on who you need to contact before starting an agri-food venture is available from business development specialists across the province. Contact your local Agriculture office for names and phone numbers.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

Agri-News Briefs

Warmblood horse auction a success

The first annual Fall Breeders Classic Sale held on November 4, 1995, in conjunction with the Farm Fair International, featured the first Canadian Warmblood Association sponsored sale. The audience of 1,000 spectators and buyers included top trainers from Edmonton, Calgary and the Vancouver area. Seventeen warmblood horses sold at auction for an average price of $4,800. High selling horse, at $10,250, was a black Canadian Warmblood mare. "For a first time effort, the quality of horses on offer and the smooth operation of the sale was very impressive," says Chris Gould, chairman of the Canadian Warmblood Horse Breeders Association. Plans are underway for the second Fall Breeders Classic Sale, to be held November 2, 1996 at Northlands Park, Edmonton. For further information, contact Chris Gould at (403)786-4337, Mayerthorpe.

Feed Prices

World supplies of feed grains are low and prices have been increasing from week to week since mid-1995. The weak supply of feed grains can be attributed to the 1995 U.S. corn crop being 25 per cent lower than usual, export subsidies between the U.S. and Europe set to reduce surpluses, strong export demand from Asia, reduced acreage seeded, and unfavourable spring conditions in the U.S. which has delayed seeding. The result of these combined factors is that feed prices have increased significantly in the past few months. The high feed prices are being felt by all livestock industry areas, beef, hog, lamb and poultry producers. For more information, contact Alberta Agriculture marketing specialist, Doug Walkey at (403)782-3301, Lacombe.

Stray Voltage Seminar

Stray voltage, known also as tingle voltage, is any voltage that appears in metal work, such as in livestock buildings or livestock waterers. It can causes problems to producers and can result in a loss of income. The seminar will provide farm operators information to help them understand the sources of stray voltage (SV) and demonstrate how to measure SV. "Symptoms associated with SV will be discussed at the seminar as well as the results obtained when the levels of SV are reduced," says John Chang, energy engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Reports and scientific studies on levels of SV that cause behaviour and/or production problems will also be presented. The seminar may be of special interest to livestock producers (particularly dairy and beef cattle and swine), electricians, government and electrical utility personnel. To get a brochure and registration form, or for further information, contact John Chang at (403)427-2181 in Edmonton. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Coming agricultural events

NABC 8 Agricultural Biotechnology: Novel Products and New Partnerships
Rutgers State University
New Brunswick, New Jersey – June 5-7
Jill Braun - (908)932-9271 or fax (908)932-1187
New Brunswick, New Jersey;
e-mail braunj@gandalf.rutgers.edu;
National Agricultural Biotechnology Council (NABC) office
(607)254-4856, Ithaca, New York;
e-mail NABC@cornell.edu

Alberta Dairy Congress
Black Gold Centre
Leduc – June 6-7
Congress office (403)986-5454, Leduc

Intagra Display Schedule for June/96
Reynolds Alberta Museum, Wetaskiwin – June 8-9
Lloydminster Exhibition, Lloydminster – June 10-13
Earl Royer (403)451-5959, Edmonton

Diagnosing and correcting problems with trees, shrubs and perennials
Devonian Botanic Garden
Edmonton – June 8
Registrations (403)987-2064

Pride in Progress: Agriculture in Transition
Reynolds - Alberta Museum
Wetaskiwin – June 8-9
Cynthia Blackmore (403)361-1351, Wetaskiwin, or
1-800-661-4726

National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association (NFRBMEA) Annual Conference
Holiday Inn
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota – June 9-12
John Whitehead (403)320-3311 or (403)328-8989,
Lethbridge

22nd Annual Alberta Pork Congress
Westerner Park
Red Deer – June 11-13
Patrick Kennedy (403)340-5307, Red Deer

Agricultural Biotechnology Conference (ABIC'96)
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan – June 11-14
The Signature Group (306)934-1772, Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan

@EVENTS HEAD = 6th International Conference on Computers in Agriculture
Marriott CasaMagna Hotel
Cancún, Mexico – June 11-14
Fedro Zazueta (904)392-7260, Gainsville, Florida;
@EVENTS BODY = e-mail FSZ@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Women of Unifarm Annual Convention
Green Way Inn
Lacombe – June 13-14
Shirley Dyck (403)451-5912, Edmonton

Cowboy Poetry Gathering of '96
Pincher Creek Agricultural Grounds and Community Hall
Pincher Creek – June 14-16
Bev (403)628-2115, Pincher Creek

Canadian Farm & Industrial Equipment Institute 29th Annual Summer Conference
Jasper Park Lodge
Jasper – June 14-17
CFIEI office (905)632-8483, Burlington, Ontario

Food & U Day – A Festival of Learning About What We Eat
Edmonton Research Station, University of Alberta
Edmonton – June 15
Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Science
(403)492-3239, Edmonton

4th International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources
Leipzig, Germany – June 17-23
Conference program office (39-6)52255871, Rome, Italy;
e-mail ICPPGR@fao.org

International Grains Council Conference 1996
Canary Wharf
London, England – June 18
IGC office 0171-513 1122 or fax 0171-712-0071,
London, England; e-mail igc-fac@int-grains-council.org.uk

Alberta Poultry Industry Workshop
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer – June 18-20
Rod Chernos (403)948-8533, Airdrie

Stockman's Range Management Course
Goodwin Hall
Debolt – June 18-20
Donna Lawrence (403)624-6116, Peace River

6th Annual Stockmen's Range Management Course
Maycroft – June 10-12
Maycroft (Lundbreck)
@EVENTS BODY = Barry Adams (403)381-5486, Lethbridge

Food & U Day
Edmonton Research Station, 60th Avenue & 115 Street
Edmonton – June 14 & 15
Marjorie Perich (403)492-0379, Edmonton
@EVENTS HEAD = Society for Range Management
Intermountain Section Summer Tour

Antelope Creek Ranch
Brooks June – 18-20
Bob Kaufman (403)793-2544, Brooks

Alberta Egg Producers Workshop
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer – June 18-20
Rudy Kiist or Warren Chorney (403)250-1197, Calgary

Alberta Beef Congress
Westerner Park
Red Deer – June 19-20
Patrick Kennedy (403)347-4491, Red Deer

Western Canada Farm Progress Show
Regina Exhibition Park
Regina, Saskatchewan – June 19-22
Regina Exhibition (306)781-9200, Regina, Saskatchewan

Mapping the Future: an International Conference on Satellite Technology and its Applications for Agriculture
Regina, Saskatchewan – June 19-22
Grant Wood (306)966-5586, Regina, Saskatchewan

Direct Seeding Demonstration Days
Taber June 25 (rain June 26)
Castor – July 11
Red Deer June 27 (rain July 4)
Michelle McKinnon (403)948-8512, Airdrie

Leadership Through Counselling Seminar
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose – June 28-July 2
Marg Stark (403)948-8510, Airdrie

Rural Education and Development Association Youth Seminars
Goldeye Centre (9km west of Nordegg)
Nordegg - July 1-7; 7-13; 13-19; 19-25; 25-31; and 31-August 6
(Six one-week seminars scheduled for three age levels)
Marg Langford (403)451-5959, Edmonton
e-mail: ruraled@compusmart.ab.ca

Edmonton District 4-H Beef Show and Sale
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton – July 2 & 3
Gordon Fuhr (403)939-2177, Morinville

2nd Annual Antelope Creed Ranch Stockmen's Range Management Course
@EVENTS BODY = Antelope Creek Ranch

Brooks – July 3-4
Bob Kaufman (403)793-2544, Brooks

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede
Calgary – July 5-14
Exhibition & Stampede office (403)261-0101, Calgary; or
1-800-661-1260 (Canada & U.S.)

1996 Annual Canadian Egg Marketing Association and National Producer Conference
Rimrock Hotel
Banff – July 7-10
Rudy Kiist or Warren Chorney (403)250-1197, Calgary

AIC Annual Meeting – Water Resources and Agriculture: Protecting our Future
Lethbridge – July 7-11
Dr. Gerald Mears (403)327-4561, Lethbridge;
Brent Paterson (403)381-5515, Lethbridge

6th World Rabbit Congress
Toulouse-Labège Diagora Congress Centre
Toulouse, France – July 9-12
INRA (fax)33 61 28 53 19, Castanet Cedex, France;
e-mail: lebas@toulouse.inra.fr

Canadian Seed Growers' Association 92nd Annual Meeting
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba – July 10-12
CSGA office (613)236-0497, Ottawa, Ontario;
e-mail seeds@odo.eis.ca

AG-Grow 2000 Field Days
Emerald Agricultural College
Emerald, Queensland, Australia – July 11-13
James Dein 079 824244 Emerald, Queensland, Australia

Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show
Bashaw Agricultural Society Grounds
Bashaw – July 14-16
Henry Wiegman (403)427-4532, Edmonton

Canadian Bankers Association Agriculture Finance Conference Outside the Corral: Stampede of Changes and Opportunities
Palliser Hotel
Calgary – July 14-16
Jennifer Fisk (403)263-1454, Calgary

Junior 4-H Camp Programs
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose-Weeks are designated by age group-beginning
July 15 through to August 9
Marg Stark (403)948-8510, Airdrie

Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour
County of Newell – July 15-17
Steve Wylie (403)362-2772, Brooks
@EVENTS HEAD = West National Angora Show

Red Deer Westerner Exposition
Red Deer – July 17
Wendy Schneider, Alberta Mohair Producers Assoc.
(403)783-8581, Ponoka

50th Annual Provincial 4-H Dairy Show
@EVENTS BODY = Red Deer Westerner

Red Deer – July 19 & 20
Henry Wiegman (403)422-4444, Edmonton

Hort Week
Olds College, Horticulture Program
Olds – July 21-26
Olds College (403)556-8321, Olds

Intagra Display Schedule for July/96
Alberta Provincial Service Board Tour, Brooks – July 15-16
Vermilion Fair, Vermilion – July 24-27
Exhibition and Stampede, Medicine Hat – July 31-August 3
Earl Royer (403)451-5959, Edmonton

Antelope Creek Sustainable Range Management Summer Meeting and Tour
Antelope Creek Ranch – July 18-20
Bob Kaufman (403)793-2544, Brooks

Klondike Days Exposition
Edmonton – July 18-27
Northlands Park (403)471-7210, Edmonton

Western Stock Growers' Centennial Cattle Drive
Buffalo to Medicine Hat – July 20-27
Rhonda Clark (403)250-9121, Calgary

Club Week
Olds College
Olds – July 22-27
Marg Stark (403)948-8510, Airdrie

Siksika Nation – Stockmen's Range Management Course
Siksika Nation – July 24-25
Collin Springchief (403)734-5240, Gleichen

Harmony With Nature
Open Creek Dam
Rimbey – July 25-28
Lorraine or Darrell Neal (403)782-2649, Lacombe

2nd Annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic
Olds College
Olds – July 31-August 2
Henry Wiegman (403)422-4444, Edmonton

4-H Project Congress
Olds College
Olds – July 31-August 2
Lori MacRae (403)422-4582, Edmonton

Seed Analysis and Grading for Registered Seed Establishments
@EVENTS BODY = Olds College

Olds – August 6-8
Olds College Educational Development Centre (403)556-8321, Olds

10th Annual Provincial 4-H Judging Competition
@EVENTS BODY = Olds College

Olds – August 9-11
Henry Wiegman (403)422-4444, Edmonton

People Developing People
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose – August 11-16
Marg Stark (403)948-8510, Airdrie

8th Symposium of the International Organization of Science and Technology Education (IOSTE)
Edmonton – August 17-24
Raja Panwar (403)427-2984, Edmonton
RPanwar@edc.gov.ab.ca;
Sharon Jamieson (403)492-5339, Edmonton
sharon.jamieson@ualberta.c

Five is One:4-H Conservation Camp
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose – August 18-23
Carol Sullivan (403)422-4499, Edmonton

GrowTech 96
Miami Beach, Florida – September 8-10
RAI/EGI Exhibitions (508)664-6455, North Reading, Maine

96 Outdoor Farm Show
Burford, Ontario – September 10-12
Outdoor Farm Show-1-800-563-5441 or (519)822-2890, Guelph, Ontario

Seed Analysis and Grading for Registered Seed Establishments Workshop
Olds College
Olds – September 9-11
Olds College (403)556-8321,Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (403)495-5395, Edmonton or (403)292-4105, Calgary

Specialist Workshop on Seed Analysis of Grasses and Legumes
Olds College
Olds – September 11-13
Olds College (403)556-8321, Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (403)495-5395, Edmonton or (403)292-4105, Calgary

17th Western Nutrition Conference
Fantasyland Hotel – September 19-20
Edmonton
Rick Corbett (403)427-8906, Edmonton
Lynda Martell (403)427-6624, Edmonton
Judy Carss or Bev Cote (403)492-3236, Edmonton

1996 National Extension Technology Conference
@EVENTS BODY = Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel

Atlanta, Georgia – September 28-October 2
Bob Molleur (706)542-8965, Athens, Georgia;
Bryan Shipman (706)542-5387, Athens, Georgia;
Don Hamilton (706)542-5350, Athens, Georgia;
@EVENTS BODY = listserv at NETC96-L@uga.cc.uga.edu

18th Canadian Waste Management Conference
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba – October 7-10
Jennifer Adams (613)723-3525, Nepean, Ontario

2nd World Congress Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences
Jaarbeurts, Beatrix Building, Congress Centre
Jaabeursplein, The Netherlands – October 20-24
FBU Congress Bureau 31.30.253.5044/2728,
Utecht, Netherlands; e-mail l.donkers@pobox.ruu.nl

4-H Silver Anniversary Weekend and Silent Auction
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose – October 26&27
Vicki Berger (403)427-2541, Edmonton

The 8th World Ayrshire Conference
Western portion-Vancouver and Edmonton – October 24-30
Maritime portion-Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick – October 31-November 3
Quebec portion-Riviere du Loup, Quebec City and Victoriaville November 3-6
Conference portion-Montreal – November 7-9
Ontario portion-Ottawa and Toronto – November 10-16
Sylvie Mahannah (514)457-2010, Montreal, Quebec

Royal Agricultural Winter Fair
Toronto, Ontario – November 2-16
Canadian National Exhibition Grounds (416)393-6400,
Toronto, Ontario

Northlands Farm Fair International
Agricom
Edmonton – November 2-10
Michele Weitzel (403)471-7260, or
Roxanne Carr (403)471-7300, Edmonton

Canadian Finals Rodeo
Northlands Coliseum
Edmonton – November 6-10
Don Gray (403)471-7210, Edmonton

Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association Fall Conference and Seminar
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton – November 8-10
@EVENTS BODY = Darell Kavich (403)632-7399, Vegreville;

Darcee Robertson (403)946-4032, Crossfield

Alberta Horticulture Congress
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton – November 7-9
Simone Demers Collins (403)422-1789, Edmonton

Farming Without Subsidies – The New Zealand Experience
Lincoln University, Lincoln, Canterbury, New Zealand – November 11-13
(Pre-conference and Post-conference tours also available)
Cy McAndrews-(403)482-6517
2nd National Conference on Dairying
Toronto – November 13-14
Kerri-Sue Lang (905)342-2099, Toronto, Ontario

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) World Food Summit
Rome – November 13-17
FAO 52253259 or 52253625, Rome, Italy

Outstanding Young Farmers National Awards Program
Toronto, Ontario – November 12-17
Canadian National Exhibition Grounds (905)430-3245,
Toronto, Ontario

Canadian Western Agribition
Regina, Saskatchewan – November 23-29
Regina Exhibition Park (306)565-0565, Regina, Saskatchewan

Earthkeeping 25th Anniversary Convention
Nisku Inn
Leduc – November 29
Kathryn Olson (403)428-6981, Edmonton

Western Canadian Grazing Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer – December 9-11
Lorene Cunningham (403)443-7544, Three Hills

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer – January 10-12, 1997
Les Burwash (403)948-8532, Airdrie

Canadian Produce Marketing Association Annual Meeting
Banff – January 29-February 1, 1997
Phil Dixon (403)447-1860, Edmonton

International Conference on Agricultural Production and Nutrition
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. – March 19-21, 1997
William Lockeretz - Tufts University - Medford, MA 02155
e-mail: wlockeretz@infonet.tufts.edu

Farm and Ranch Show

@EVENTS BODY = Northlands Agricom

Edmonton – March 26-29, 1997

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.
   - Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or
     e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
   - Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
   - Olds College (403)556-8355
     e-mail for **The Connection**
     73543.2137@compuserve.com
   - Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1996**? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates?

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). **Please include your telephone number**:

Please return this form by* August 23, 1996 *to:

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6
FAX (403)427-2861

("Coming agricultural events" is published four times a year in **Agri-News**.
The next list will be **September 2, 1996.**
Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca.)

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AGRI-NEWS

June 10, 1996

CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

Alberta's 'under cover' agents

Alberta has a very dynamic and vibrant greenhouse crops industry. In 1994 it was reported that there were 346 operators having 7,488,626 square feet of greenhouse space, some under glass, most under plastic. Total sales of these greenhouses equalled $51 million, or about $6.88 per square foot of total area.

A variety of crops are grown under protected cultivation. Vegetables crops include seedless cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, egg plants, peppers and some growth in hot peppers. Alberta's cucumber and tomato growers can genuinely claim to be among the best producers in the world. Automation in greenhouse environmental control, growers management practices and abundant light even in winter are factors that have played a major role in Alberta's above average productions.

In 1994, seedless cucumber growers harvested up to 150 fruits per square metre on a year round basis. Tomato growers obtained yields as high as 64 kilograms per square metre.

"The cooperative attitude between growers is one of the most important factors in the growth of this industry in Alberta," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Growers have learned to use proper temperature to make plants transpire for several hours during the light period. Mechanical controls such as, carbon dioxide enrichment, practised during winter and summer, and computer controlled fogging and air movement systems in the greenhouses contribute to growing success."

The tree seedling sector is one of Alberta's recent success stories, growing close to 50 million each year for reforestation. The bedding plant sector is reputed for its quality due, in part, to the good climate in the province. Cut flowers are among the best in the world because of excellent light in both summer and winter.

"There are many players contributing to the success of this industry, including Alberta Agriculture's greenhouse specialists," adds Dr. Mirza. "The research, extension and education network we have in Alberta is incomparable. Educational activities at Olds College have certainly contributed and continue to expand. Recently Olds College announced it will award degrees in horticulture. Fairview College is developing a program for tree seedling growers."

The Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association is an active group working towards the betterment of the industry by addressing issues such as taxation, identifying research needs and promoting the value of this industry.

A recent, positive development that will help unify all horticulture sectors is the formation of the Council of Alberta Horticulture Industries (CAHI). The CAHI will represent the interests of all growers of horticulture crops in the province and makes sure that all concerns are brought to the attention of government.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Alberta's 'under cover' agents 1

2nd annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic 2

Yellowheaded Spruce Sawfly 2

Direct seeding annual crops into sod 2

Sun smart 3

Another record in agri-food exports for 1995 3

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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Alberta's greenhouse industry can be used as a model for many others," says Dr. Mirza. "It is encouraging to watch this industry grow. There are always new faces at the educational workshops and that keeps the industry interesting and dynamic."

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza
(403)422-1789, Edmonton
Jim Calpas
(403)362-3391, Brooks

2nd annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic

4-H members will want to be in Olds on July 31 to August 2, 1996. For three action filled days 4-H members from across the province will get together to compare horse knowledge, participate in horse clinics, compete for event prizes and enjoy the company of other 4-Hers.

"Last year, at the very first Provincial Horse Classic, 110 Alberta 4-H members and leaders enjoyed the event," says Henry Wiegman, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We are expecting up to 200 kids and 100 leaders to participate this year. Activities will include a team horse bowl contest, demonstration, marketing and horse hippology contests."

A headline clinic will be offered each day of the event for members and leaders. Topics being considered are horse dentistry, horse discipline, hunter jumper and seat and saddle.

"We are very pleased that Airdrie Trailer Sales Ltd. and United Farmers of Alberta have shown their support by being major sponsors of the Horse Classic.

Cost of the three day program is $40. The deadline for entries is June 15, so it's important for all interested 4-Hers to get their applications in.

Members are responsible for their own room, board and travel costs. Camping and Olds College packages are available. 4-H club leaders have copies of the official program and additional information on the accommodation packages available.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(403)422-4444

Yellowheaded Spruce Sawfly

If the needles on your spruce tree start mysteriously disappearing in June, it may be the work of the yellowheaded spruce sawfly says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"The damage begins with only parts of the new tender needles being eaten away," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Crop Diversification Centre South, in Brooks. "As the pest grows, so does its appetite. Eventually it will eat whole needles and work its way back to old growth."

Other characteristics of an infected tree are shabby appearance and a yellowish brown colour. In an excessive attack, trees can be stripped of all their needles.

"Sawfly attacks can kill your spruce trees," adds Barkley. "Repeated attacks weaken trees, making them more susceptible to other factors like adverse weather conditions."

Seeing this insect before it causes severe damage is part of the problem. The yellowheaded spruce sawfly is well camouflaged and looks a lot like the needles it eats. When newly hatched, they are caterpillar-like and yellowish green in colour. They have a yellow or green head. Mature insects are 2 cm long with either a yellow or red head. The body is waxy looking with green with grey-green stripes running from head to tail.

Feeding stops in mid-July as the larvae drop to the ground. They spin a cocoon in the soil and over winter there.

"The biggest trick to controlling this insect is seeing them. After detection, controlling sawfly is quite simple," says Barkley. "Hand picking is one option. Hosing the larva with water is another. Malathion and permethrin are two chemical control options."

If using chemical control, be sure to read the instructions carefully before mixing and applying.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-3391

Direct seeding annual crops into sod

No-till seeding of annual crops into a pasture or hay field could offer a practical alternative to plowing sod. The conservation and development branch research team of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is studying the agronomics and economics of direct seeding canola, peas and barley into sod.

"Some farmers are getting good results with direct seeding grasses to rejuvenate pasture and forage stands," says Jeff Prochnau, research agrologist. "Now they're asking about direct seeding of other crops into sod as part of a forage-annual crop rotation. We've set up this project to help answer some of their questions and so far the results look promising."

If yields turn out to be similar to those from conventional plots, no-till seeding could offer savings through lower fuel, machinery and labour costs. No-till fields are also less susceptible to wind and water erosion.

This project follows a study done in 1993-94 that compared barley direct seeded into sod with a conventional seeding system. The direct seeded treatment used 1L/acre of 'Roundup'

Cont'd on page 3

applied each spring to control weeds and forage grasses. In the conventional treatment, the plots were plowed the first year and cultivated the next.

"In the first year, grass regrowth in the no-till plots reduced crop yields to about 78 per cent compared to the conventional plots," adds Prochnau. "Brome grass and creeping red fescue competed with the barley. By the second year, however, the no-till plots out yielded the conventional plots."

These promising results led to the expansion of the study to look at other annual crops and compare spring and fall spraying of 'Roundup'. Plots used in the study were on a hay field near Warburg and on the University of Alberta Research Station in Edmonton.

"The study results indicated that when seeding barley, fall spraying gives significantly higher grain yields than spring spraying," says Prochnau. "The pea grain yields in Edmonton were significantly higher in the fall sprayed treatment compared to the ploughed treatment. However, at Warburg the direct seeded pea yields were slightly lower than the conventionally ploughed treatment. There was no significant difference in pea grain yield between the fall and spring sprayed treatments at either site."

The canola yields were not great at either site in the first year of study. A second year of research is needed. The project is continuing in 1996 with funding from Monsanto Canada Inc., Agrium Inc. and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"Cost is a key factor for producers," says Prochnau. "The intensive tillage and harrowing operations typically used to convert sod to annual crop production are expensive and time consuming. We think no-till could be a viable option in many situations."

Planning ahead is advisable. Better results will be obtained when the sod field is sprayed the year prior to seeding. A longer interval between spraying and seeding gives more time for the sod to breakdown.

Contact: *Jeff Prochnau*
(403)422-4385

Sun smart

Slip, slap and slop – that is the advice coming from recent University of Alberta Department of Human Ecology research results.

"We have always focused on wearing protective clothing, long sleeved shirts and hats, when people are working out in the sun or are exposed to sun," says Karen Malyk, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's protective clothing research associate. "Slip on some clothing, slap on a hat and slop on some sunscreen of at least SPF 15. These are a few things you can do to minimize sun damage to your skin."

Sun damage to skin is cumulative. Any change in skin colour, tanning and burning, indicates that your skin has been damaged. With the depletion of the ozone layer, there is an increasing need for ultraviolet radiation (UVR) protection. Skin cancer cases are increasing due to exposure to UVB and UVA rays from the sun.

"It is estimated that in Canada this year 53,000 new cases of skin cancer will be reported, 3,000 of these will be malignant melanoma," adds Malyk. "About 80 per cent of a person's lifetime exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays occurs before age 18 so children are especially in need of protection from the sun."

A wide range of fabrics were tested for their ability to block UVR and were given sun protection factor (SPF) ratings. The UofA research found that some polyester in fabric provides slightly more protection than 100 per cent cotton; tightly woven fabrics increase protection; darker coloured fabrics absorb more UVR and are more protective; heavier fabrics provide higher SPF ratings; several layers of lightweight fabric increase protection; and dry fabrics are generally one third more protective than wet fabrics.

"Alberta's farmers and ranchers should take note of Environment Canada's daily UV index and, because they are more likely to be outside during the peak hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., dress accordingly. The UV index is often mentioned on local radio stations as part of their weather forecast," says Malyk. "When the UV index is high (7-9), as often experienced in June, July and August, a wide brimmed hat, long sleeved tightly woven shirt, pants and a generous application of sunscreen are definitely called for to prevent skin damage."

Skin cancer can be prevented. Just remember to Slip on the right clothing, Slap on a wide brimmed hat and Slop on an SPF 15 sunscreen.

Additional information can be obtained from the home economics branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, your local pharmacist, the Canadian Cancer Society or the Canadian Dermatology Association.

Contact: *Karen Malyk*
(403)427-2412

Another record in agri-food exports for 1995

International trade statistics show that Alberta's exports of primary agriculture, food and beverage products hit an all time high in 1995. The total export value of $4.2 billion was up 16.1 per cent from $3.6 billion in 1994. Alberta accounted for 24 per cent of total Canadian agri-food exports. Alberta agri-food products were exported to 138 countries.

Cont'd on page 4

The top 10 commodities, 1) wheat, 2) live cattle, 3) canola seed, 4) beef, 5) barley, 6) canola oil, 7) raw hides and skins, 8) pork, 9) oilseed cake and meal, and 10) peas, account for 80 per cent of Alberta's total agri-food exports.

"Wheat continues to be the major export commodity and accounts for 22 per cent of agri-food export revenues in Alberta," says Michael Adam, trade statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Total value of wheat exports rose 11.5 per cent to $906.8 million."

The upward trend of exports in value-added products is one of the most significant highlights. These consumer ready manufactured foods and products increased by 16.6 per cent to a value of $1.26 billion. "This commodity group includes meats, oils, animal feed preparations and cereal preparations," says Adam. "Secondary handling and processing is important to the continued growth of the agri-food industry in Alberta which makes growth in this area very encouraging."

The U.S. continues to be Alberta's largest single agriculture market and accounted for 48 per cent of the total value of agri-food shipments. Exports to the U.S. in 1995 totalled almost $2 billion.

Exports to Japan grew a significant 38 per cent in 1995. Shipments totalling $709.0 million included major increases in canola seed, wheat and beef. Revenue from beef shipments almost doubled in value to $44.8 million.

"A market that is really on the move is the People's Republic of China," says Barbara Pekalski, research assistant with the market analysis and statistics branch. "This market showed the greatest dollar growth, more than doubling the previous year's exports, reaching $368.7 million. Larger shipments of wheat, barley and canola seed contributed to this growth."

Alberta's agri-food industry continues to grow and diversify. The industry has a very positive impact on the province's economy, environment and quality of life.

Contact: Michael Adam (403)422-2903
Barbara Pekalski (403)422-3086

Agri-News briefs

Sound land management in riparian areas

The Alberta Riparian Habitat Management program helps farmers and ranchers understand how improvements in grazing management on riparian areas can make the land healthier and more productive. It is worked on cooperatively by the Alberta Cattle Commission, Trout Unlimited, the Canadian Cattleman's Association, Alberta Environmental Protection and the Public Lands branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Maintaining healthy riparian areas means abundant water, shelter and forage on pasture land. Well managed riparian areas show good stewardship of natural resources and demonstrates the compatibility of livestock grazing within an environmentally sustainable land management system. A new publication *Caring for the Green Zone - Riparian Areas and Grazing Management* is now available at Agriculture's Range Management Office, Lands Services, 2nd floor, YPM Place, 530 - 8 Street S., Bag 3014, Lethbridge, AB T1J 4C7, or call (403)381-5486. For further information on managing riparian areas, contact Rocky Mountain House regional manager Frank Gazdag at (403)845-8240, or Lethbridge regional manager Barry Adams (403)381-5486.

Little lambs eat ivy...

Alberta's outlook for summer lambs appears very favourable. Texas' buoyant price of $88.00 U.S. per cwt translates into $120.00 per cwt Canadian (using a 73 cent dollar). This is reflective of the ever tightening North American supply situation and the strong Eastern demand. "This certainly bodes well for our lamb industry," says Don Hansen, market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "All indications are that local slaughter lamb prices will remain steady, at about the $100 per cwt level, into the fall." Producers should remain cognizant of any opportunities which might present themselves. For example, with mounting feed bills, producers should not be averse to selling lighter weight lambs, especially at current prices. As well, in times of volatile prices, producers need to stay in contact with order buyers, feedlot operators and packers to realize optimal returns. For further information, contact Don Hansen at (403)422-2887, Edmonton.

Cont'd on page 5

Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame

They have demonstrated leadership in farm, rural or commodity organizations. They are leaders in the food industry and have demonstrated that leadership at the provincial, national or international level and benefitted Alberta in a significant way. They have made an outstanding contribution to agricultural development and to the quality of rural life in the province. These are the people eligible for the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame. Candidates must be nominated by three people, not members of their immediate family. Organizations may make or support nominations. Nominations are reviewed by a Selection Committee of people chosen to represent the agriculture industry. Do you know someone who deserves to be acknowledged? Nomination forms are available at all Agriculture offices or by contacting Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame, c/o Communications Division, 100A, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Outside the corral: Stampede of changes and opportunities

The 20th Canadian Bankers Association Agriculture Finance Conference is being held in Calgary on July 14 - 16, 1996. Almost 400 agricultural finance professionals from Canada and the U.S. will be in attendance. Conference sessions will look at recent developments and current thinking in the Canadian agri-food industry. The agri-food industry is experiencing rapid change and development. This conference will provide an opportunity for bankers and other industry leaders to get a broad view of trends and the forces behind the trends that are affecting agriculture and agri-food industries. The conference will be held at the Palliser Hotel. Time has been set aside in the conference schedule for delegates to take in the Calgary Stampede. For further information, contact the Allan Management Group (306)789-3600, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Hogs can do no wrong

At present, it seems that hogs can literally do no wrong. Strong support for pork continues in spite of lower beef prices and the onset of herd liquidation. U.S. pork production for the first four months of this year is down 2.9 per cent from the corresponding time last year. As well, current cold storage reports indicate supplies are trailing last year. "The surprise of lower available market ready hogs in the U.S. (smaller fall farrowing than recognized by the USDA) appears to have been just the wild card the pork industry needed to push prices over the top in the short-term," says Don Hansen of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's market analysis and statistics branch. As well, the reduction in the U.S. breeding herd certainly bodes well for prices in the second half of 1996. With expected lower returns, the high corn prices may be enough of an incentive for producers to cut back on their output. "Producers should take advantage of the exquisite cash and futures prices," adds Hansen. It would be prudent for producers to forward price some of their second half production, as the current rally in the futures market is approaching all-time highs. For further information, contact Don Hansen at (403)422-2887, Edmonton.

Beaverlodge Beekeepers field day

The Alberta Honey Producers Cooperative meeting is being held on June 14, 1996 at the Northern Agriculture Research Centre in Beaverlodge, Alberta. The meeting will be the kickoff event for a full day of workshops, discussions, presentations and information sharing. Both commercial and information displays will be set up throughout the event. From an Alberta update to formic acid applications methods, the program offers information important to beekeepers. Mr. Dave Tharle, Canadian Honey Council, will address the participants. The meeting also features Mr. Paul Van Westendorp who will give a B.C. update. Beekeepers in attendance will have a chance to discuss border closure in a 'bear pit' session. The meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. For further information or an agenda, contact Dr. Don Nelson at the Northern Agriculture Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, (403)354-2212.

Boer Goat evaluation clinic

The Canadian Boer Goat Association is holding the first annual Boer Goat evaluation clinic on June 28 - 30, 1996. The clinic, which will include a junior judges training course, workshops and demonstrations, will be held at the Hebson Arena in Okotoks, Alberta. Mr. Boetie Malan and Mr. Phillip Henderson, top breeders from South Africa, make up the training panel for the course. The course will give attendees a chance to learn how to evaluate Boer Goats from these long time breeder judges. Registration deadline for the junior judges training course is June 10, 1996. The cost of the training course is $50. General admission for one day attendance (Saturday) is $5, family $10. Tickets will be available at the door. Other features of the event include panel discussions on production and marketing challenges, commercial goat farming, hoof trimming, and cooking with chevon. For exhibitor packages, details of events or further information, contact Brian Payne at (403)793-2506.

Cont'd on page 6

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Crop reporters needed

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is looking for crop reporters to be surveyed approximately three times during this crop season. "Reporters will not be keeping specific data, such as gauging rainfall. They will be asked questions on general crop condition, development and yield potential," says Wendy Boje, with Agriculture's market analysis and statistics branch. The survey will be done over the telephone, taking about five minutes, and will be conducted at the end of June, again in mid-August and finally in mid-September. All information is confidential and will be used only to assess provincial crop condition. Interested parties should call their district office or the market analysis and statistics branch in Edmonton by dialing 310-0000 and asking for 427-4011, within the next two weeks. If you have any questions or for further information, contact Wendy Boje at (403)422-2906, Edmonton.

AGRI-NEWS

June 17, 1996

CANADIANA

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50th annual Provincial 4-H Dairy Show

For 50 years Alberta's 4-H Clubs have arranged and held a provincial dairy show. As can be expected, they will be celebrating this anniversary with all the pride and celebration due the event on July 19 and 29, 1996 at the Red Deer Westerner Exposition.

All Alberta 4-H members entered in the 4-H dairy project can compete in the judging and clipping contest. Each member's placing in club conformation and showmanship classes determines eligibility for conformation and showmanship competition.

"We are expecting between 75 – 90 participants and 25 leaders for the anniversary show," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We have invited alumni back to watch this year's event. We have even added an alumni showmanship competition just to make things even more interesting. All alumni are welcome and we look forward to seeing a good turn out of former 4-Hers."

There are over 40 sponsors involved in this show with major sponsorship being donated by the dairy industry and the Red Deer Westerner Exposition. Support from all sponsors is gratefully acknowledged.

"The Provincial Dairy Show is such a long standing success because it fulfills so many criteria for a great event," adds Wiegman. "The Show gives members experience competing at a provincial level, gives 4-Hers a chance to broaden their knowledge, lets members display and share their skills while learning from others, and promotes awareness of the 4-H dairy project."

Deadline for entries is July 12, 1996. All applications should be sent to the provincial 4-H office, Room 200, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman*
(403)422-4444

Success is tasty

The agri-food industry in Alberta is growing by leaps and bounds and provincial business development specialists are working with Alberta's agri-food entrepreneurs providing assistance in getting good ideas and some great recipes to market.

One of the recent initiatives, coordinated by five of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's business development specialists, was the *'Taste of Success'*. Products entered in the *Taste of Success* went through a sensory evaluation and general product evaluation. Products, including vegetarian soup, horseradish jelly, wild boar smokies to cinnamon knots, were ranked by 50 taste panellists.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

50th annual Provincial 4-H Dairy Show 1
Success is tasty 1
Multi-Media library - twenty videos richer 2
Beekeeper registration forms in the mail 2
Western Heritage Centre opens on Canada Day 3
A new guide added to the Agriculture arsenal 3
Briefs 4

Alberta
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"The food entrepreneurs also met for individual consultations with Jack Trach, president of Klondike Food Brokers and Karen Goad, agri-food development consultant," says Janice McGregor, business development specialist. "These two consultants offered recommendations on promotional materials, labels, pricing and marketing. In follow-up interviews, most of the producers involved indicated they will change their product formulation, labelling or packaging based on feedback from the taste challenge."

Shirley Alton, who operates Prairie Orchards in Ardrossan, was one of the producers involved in the challenge. The 50 panellists ranked her Saskatoon whole berry jam on appearance, flavour, texture and overall acceptability. The results of the taste panels were especially encouraging as over 90 per cent of the tasters ranked the Saskatoon jam highly. Some useful opinions were listed on the score sheet as many panellists preferred the flavour and texture of jam with crushed berries over whole or pureed berries.

"This product evaluation is a great value for the $30 entry fee," adds McGregor. "The producers were competing to win a nutrition label, complete with a chemical analysis for their product. The nutrition label is worth about $150, the cost if a producer was to commission having one prepared."

Advice and counsel on marketing are also provided by the business development specialists in the province. Producers certainly don't want demand for a new product to outpace production capabilities by such an extent that consumers get impatient and the chosen market outlets cancel orders.

"Marketing, although not an exact science, has predictable components," says McGregor. "We want Alberta's agri-food entrepreneurs to be successful and we are here to help them define their market, produce and display their product to its greatest advantage."

The business development specialists were very encouraged by the first *Taste of Success* and intend to coordinate more of them. If you are currently producing a food product and would like to be involved in the next challenge, keep in touch with your Alberta Agriculture business development specialist for details.

Contact: Janice McGregor
Toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator and asking for (403)933-4351

Multi-Media library – twenty videos richer

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's (AAFRD) multi-media library has released the spring edition of the *Multi-Media News*.

The publication lists well over twenty new videotapes recently added to AAFRD's multi-media library, many of which deal with hot topics in the industry. Most of the new videos are also available on loan from AAFRD district offices across the province.

"We've got all sort of titles aimed at every taste," says library information officer Ken Blackley. "Want to know about world trade and its effects on agriculture and food? We've just added the latest installment to our *World Trading Games* series. If a new seeder is in your future, let farm machinery specialist Murray Green help you decide what's best for you in *Ground Openers*. And if you're thinking about grazing your cattle longer, you won't want to miss *Dormant-Season Grazing*. And speaking of cattle, what's their impact on our province's water? Find out in *The Effects of Livestock on Water Quality*. These and many other titles are included in the new publication."

Blackley adds that video loan orders may be placed at any AAFRD district office or by contacting the central multi-media library in Edmonton. Titles not available at a district office will be forwarded there for user pickup. Edmonton-area users can pick up materials from the multi-media library.

Copies of the *Multi-Media News* may be obtained by writing the Multi-Media Library, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Communications Division, 7000-113 street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6. An Internet version is also available by e-mailing blackle@agric.gov.ab.ca.

Contact: Ken Blackley
(403)422-3951

Beekeeper registration forms in the mail

The Bee Act of Alberta requires that all persons who operate bees in Alberta or who own any beekeeping equipment are required to register annually. The apiculture section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development recently sent out letters to all known beekeepers in the province and to many others who have recently indicated an intention to become beekeepers.

"If or when problems with bee diseases arise, the registration certainly makes it easier to get information out to all beekeepers in the province," says Kenn Tuckey, provincial apiculturist headquartered at Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North. "Being able to get in touch with beekeepers quickly means faster action and a better response time in containing problems and disease.

"Currently, two parasitic mites are becoming established within the Alberta industry and all beekeepers are urged to test their bees annually so treatment can be initiated while the parasites are still controllable."

Cont'd on page 3

The information from the registration forms provides up to date, accurate information on the beekeeping industry. This information can also be used to evaluate the necessity or effectiveness of government programs.

Contact: *Kenn Tuckey*
(403)422-1789

Doug Colter
(403)837-2211 or
1-800-769-2264

The Western Heritage Centre opens on Canada Day

The Western Heritage Centre's grand opening is planned for July 1, 1996 in Cochrane, Alberta. It promises to be a day of entertainment for the whole family.

"This is the first major Canadian attraction dedicated to the history of western life," says Lynda Skene, marketing director. "The Centre will inform, entertain and educate visitors using hands-on, interactive and interpretive experiences that present the history and industry of ranching, farming and rodeo in western Canada."

The harsh realities of living on an early farm or ranch will be featured, complete with sights, sounds and smells. There will also be exhibits and displays detailing innovations that have affected farming and ranching through the years and into the 21st century. Exhibits will be changed continually so with each visit there will always be new things to discover.

"The Western Heritage Centre is also the home to the Canadian Rodeo Hall of Fame," adds Frederick. "Visitors will enjoy interactively becoming a rodeo clown or a bull rider when using the hands-on exhibits."

The facility includes an art gallery, board room, meeting room, classroom, 200 seat theatre, 250 seat restaurant, outdoor patio, Rodeo lounge and Hall of Vision lounge. A gift shop offers items ranging from t-shirts to high-end bronzes and western artwork.

The Western Heritage Centre is located on the Cochrane Ranche, a 160 acre Provincial Historic Site, 20 minutes west of Calgary at the intersection of Highways 22 and 1A.

Hours for the Centre are: Monday to Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the summer, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Labour Day to Victoria Day. Yearly passes and group discounts are available.

Contact: *Lynda Skene*
(403)932-3514

A new guide added to the Agriculture arsenal

A Guide to Using Native Plants on Disturbed Lands is a new book that concentrates on 'native' plants, those that were in Alberta prior to Euro-American settlement. The value of revegetating areas with native plants has only recently been recognized. These plants are well adapted to our climate. They are used for everything from timber and fruit production to herbal remedies and reclamation projects.

"It all started because of a lack of information for staff and industry trying to use native plants to reclaim industrial sites in natural landscapes," says Heather Gerling, land reclamation specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and senior author of the book. "As interest in using native plants started to grow, we had to put some reliable information together. Now Albertans are using native plants in their yards, on private acreages and for municipality, park and school naturalization programs."

The 250 page book took over three years to complete. It was a large task that brought together information for all the natural regions in the province, including native grasslands, forests and alpine areas. The guide provides useful and up-to-date information for the reclamation industry, seed producers and nurseries, land management agencies, municipalities, landscapers and gardeners. It also features tips on site preparation, seed purchase, seeding rates, timing and methods.

"There is a section of the book that describes the various plant communities and site types found in nature, explaining the relative proportion of plants which naturally occur," adds Gerling. "There are many factors to consider in deciding what to plant on disturbed or degraded sites."

Information about growth form, reproduction, forage value, grazing response, habitat and availability is presented in the book for more than 650 plants native to the province. Future editions will incorporate on-going research and additional plants.

"Working on this project has certainly made one thing clear," adds Gerling. "There is a growing need for local sources of seed production. Seed shouldn't be moved more than 500 km north from its point of origin, for example, or it could result in less competitive plants or loss of genetic diversity. Seed for many native plants is just not commercially available at all yet."

A wealth of information on native plant species, how to, what to do and what not to are contained in this first edition. It is on sale for $30 plus GST through the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Orders can also be placed over the phone by calling 427-0391 in Edmonton or 1-800-292-5697. Add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling.

Contact: *Heather Gerling*
(403)427-4658

Agri-News Briefs

Professional Recognition Award to Alberta Agriculture Agronomist

At the 1996 awards ceremony of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIA), Ron Weisenburger was honoured for his leadership, vision and commitment to the profession. The Professional Recognition Award was presented to Weisenburger for his outstanding service and leadership in the agrology profession. Weisenburger, who has both a BSc in agriculture and a MSc in animal science, has been a staff member of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for 26 years. He has always recognized the need for agrologists to serve the Alberta public in a reliable, professional and responsive manner. Weisenburger has shown his commitment during terms as AIA president and Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) director. Last year, Weisenburger was elected AIC president-elect. He will commence his term as president of the AIC this July, 1996, 25 years after attending his first AIC conference. For further information, contact Ron Weisenburger at (403)422-1821, Edmonton.

Farm Income Stability Program

The application deadline for the FISP is July 31. Application forms and the program guide can be picked up at your local Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) office or Alberta Agriculture office. Alternatively, you can phone the FISP 1-800 hot line to order an application package. Many accounting firms also have the forms available. The forms, while they may look intimidating, are quite easy to follow. You will need your farming income tax information for 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995. You will also need the beginning and end of year inventories, deferred income, accounts payable/receivable for the 1995 taxation year. Phone 1-800-851-5070 if you have any questions about FISP or how to fill out the forms After you or your accountant has completed the forms, mail them and the $50 application fee in the self-addressed envelope, provided with the application form, to the AFSC Lacombe Head Office. For further information, call the toll free FISP information hot line at 1-800-851-5070.

Monsanto Agribusiness Scholarship

Monsanto Canada Inc. is offering the Monsanto Agribusiness Scholarship once again this year. The company is awarding $1000 scholarships in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Ten scholarships are being awarded in each of the four provinces. High school graduates from a family farm who are entering either the Faculty of Agriculture (any discipline), agri-science, or management (marketing or finance) at a Canadian University for the fall 1996 session are eligible to apply. Criteria for the selection is based on academic standards, demonstrated leadership in the community and university acceptance. Submissions must contain a completed application form, two letters of references, copy of university or college acceptance letter, final high school transcript and an applicant's statement for consideration. Application forms are available at your high school, 4-H, local Agriculture office, agricultural retailers or by calling Monsanto. Submissions must be received by August 15, 1996 at Monsanto Agribusiness Scholarship, Monsanto Canada Inc., 67 Scurfield Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3Y 1G4. For further information about the scholarship, contact Dorothy Militere at (204)985-1000.

Canadian Seed Growers' Association's 92nd annual meeting

The CSGA is holding their 92nd annual meeting on July 10 - 12, 1996 at the Westin Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The location of the meeting, where the Red and the Assiniboine rivers meet, is the main commercial centre for Canada's grain trade and headquarters for many international grain companies. The 'Forks to the Future' meeting will provide perspective on future challenges and opportunities facing the industry. Changes, and the directions those changes will take, are important to the seed industry. The meeting agenda includes key speakers, discussion forums and opportunities for people of common interests and concerns in the seed industry to spend some time sharing ideas and outlooks. A full package of social events, including spouse and youth activities, is planned. For further information on the CSGA annual meeting, contact Jean Murphy at the CSGA Ottawa office (613)236-0497.

Fencing with Electricity

Building an electric fencing system? A new publication from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has been released. *Fencing with Electricity* provides the most up-to-date electric fencing information available to help you choose the right electric fence for your operation. Six different types of electric fences are examined and to make it easy to understand, over 30 photos and illustrations are included. Fence safety and maintenance as well as some troubleshooting tips on electric fencing are included in the publication. A copy of the new guide can be purchased for $10 plus GST at the Alberta Agriculture publications office. Copies can be ordered by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or calling toll free 1-800-292-5697. Please include $2 plus GST per order to cover shipping and handling charges.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 24, 1996

CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

Scouting your field

It is important to know what to look for and why you need to look for it before you set out to scout your field. Some growing season factors to keep an eye on are weather conditions, potential pest problems in your area and problems occurring outside your immediate area.

"Some of the problems occurring this year will have a lot to do with our spring weather and may depend on when seed was planted," says Ieuan Evans, plant disease specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Nutrient deficiencies seem to go hand in hand with the weather patterns we have been experiencing this year. Farmers will want to keep a close watch on emergence, noting whether it's uniform or sporadic."

Knowing what to look for at the various stages of crop development makes it easier to spot problems early and take appropriate action. From early to mid-June, crops are usually in the tillering stage. It is important to watch for signs of nitrogen, sulphur, phosphorus, potassium, copper, zinc and/or manganese deficiencies.

"Nutrient deficiency symptoms can easily be confused with other common problems so you must examine plants carefully," adds Evans. "Deficiencies in essential nutrients usually appear as leaf chlorosis (blanching or yellowing of leaves) which, if unchecked, will progress into necrosis (dead leaves and plants).

"Plants use nutrients in different ways, so depending on which nutrient is lacking the crop will show specific symptoms, which will help identify what is needed. For example, sulphur deficiency in cereals causes yellowing of young leaves with no stress evident in older leaves. On the other hand, when insufficient quantities of nitrogen are available, older (lower) leaves show the signs of deficiency first."

The problem and the crop will determine the options that should be used to correct nutrient deficiencies. Secondary nutrient deficiencies, identified during field scouting, can be arrested but a decline in yield or quality should be expected.

"Early detection is the key to correcting, or at least mitigating, nutrient deficiencies," says Evans. "It takes some effort and consistent scouting to stay on top of the problems that can affect your yield. Scouting regularly is one of the activities that can keep farmers ahead of problems."

Scouting is also a valuable practice in early detection of plant disease, insect problems, weed infestation, compaction and nonperformance of agri-chemical applications.

Support material on field scouting is available from Alberta Agriculture. Videos, including a diagnostic video, *Outstanding in your field*, and a procedures video, *Field scouting*, can be borrowed from your local agriculture office or from the

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Scouting your field 1

10th annual Provincial 4-H Judging Competition 2

May weather cool and wet 2

4-H representatives at Youth Leadership Seminar 3

Alberta well represented at 4-H Interprovincial Exchange 3

Exchange rate forward contracts 3

Plan your cuts to benefit your alfalfa stand 4

Growing more than food, Growing Alberta 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Multi-Media library, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or by calling (403)422-3951. Videos that deal specifically with identifying sclerotinia and blackleg (canola) are also available.

Publications, such as the *Green Book*, *A Practical Guide to Crop Protection*, the *Blue Book* and *Backyard Pest Management*, are also available for purchase from the Publishing Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6.

Contact: Ieuan Evans
(403)427-7098

(**NOTE:** For additional information, visit Agriculture's Internet site: www.agric.gov.ab.ca)

10th annual Provincial 4-H Judging Competition

This 4-H annual event is an excellent opportunity for members, 16 years of age or older, to review the main points of judging livestock and display and improve their individual skills.

"Delegates must qualify through their regional livestock judging competitions to be eligible for this competition," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "4-H members can contact their regional 4-H specialist for qualifying criteria. Seventy participants will be invited based on a regional quota system. It is always a real delight to watch these very accomplished young Albertans use the skills they have worked so hard to perfect."

The competition will be held on Friday, August 9 to Sunday, August 11, 1996 at Olds College and the Mountainview Fair in Olds, Alberta.

"There is a $40 fee per participant, $50 late registration, for all members eligible to compete in the judging competition," adds Wiegman. "The competition is always vigorous and the awards won are deserving."

Awards will be given for individual achievement plus finalists will have the choice of the following travel opportunities:

- four members to the Denver National 4-H Roundup, January 8 - 13, 1997, sponsored by UNIBLOK Canada;
- four members to the Nile Judging Competition, Billings, Montana in October, 1996, sponsored by UNIBLOK Canada and Alberta Canadian All Breeds Association (ACABA); and
- eight members to the Canadian Western Agribition, International 4-H Judging Seminar in Regina, Saskatchewan on November 22 - 26, 1996, sponsored by UNIBLOK Canada.

The provincial competition includes instructional and information clinics. During the competition participants judge 14 livestock competition classes including dairy cattle, beef cattle, light and heavy horses, swine and sheep conformation. Evaluation includes written and oral reasons, as well as being rated by written quiz, microphone presentation and recall questions.

Spectators are more than welcome. The event starts at 3:00 p.m. on Friday and 9:00 a.m. Saturday.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(403)422-4444

May weather cool and wet

"April showers bring May flowers!" At least that's what the nursery rhyme claims. This year, low temperatures, showers and rain kept farmers off fields and didn't prompt too many 'May flowers' to burst forth. May was cool and wet with an average temperature three degrees below normal and total precipitation 17 per cent above normal.

"The month started with cool temperatures and got even colder, the opposite of what is expected," says Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Provincial growing degree days were 62 per cent of normal, that's about 10 to 14 days behind."

Reported temperatures were six to eight degrees below normal for the week of May 6 to 12, near normal for the week of May 13 to 19 and one to three degrees below normal for the rest of May. Normal temperatures for May are 9.0° C.

"Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest monthly temperature departure, 4.5 degrees cooler than normal. Most other Alberta locations reported temperatures two to four degrees below normal," adds Dzikowski. "Monthly average temperatures this cold occur about once every 50 to 100 years."

These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Precipitation for the month was 7.3 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 47.6 mm. May is usually the fourth wettest month of the year.

Alberta's wettest region was the north west region with amounts of 20 to 120 mm, 50 to 200 per cent of normal, reported. Most other locations reported above normal precipitation. Amounts varied from 20 to 160 mm, or 50 to 260 per cent of normal. High River reported the greatest precipitation total in May, 155.4 mm or 258 per cent of normal.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

4-H representatives at Youth Leadership Seminar

Three Alberta 4-H delegates will join representatives from a number of youth organizations at a two part leadership seminar beginning on July 1.

Chella Barott of Vulcan, Shannon Frederickson of Gwynne, and Tanya Richards of Sexsmith earned the honour of attending at the annual Provincial 4-H Selections program. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement plus interpersonal skills.

The Youth Leadership Seminar is hosted by Alberta Recreation and Parks at the Blue Lake Adventure Lodge in Hinton. Part one runs July 1-6, and Part two runs October 10-12, 1996.

"The seminar's aim is improving participants' group planning, communication skills, and personal skills to help them enhance their leadership skills," says Marguerite Stark, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development provincial 4-H programs specialist.

Besides presentations, delegates participate in initiative tasks and a wide variety of recreational activities including rock climbing, orienteering, navigating, canoeing and kayaking.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403) 948-8510

Alberta well represented at 4-H Interprovincial Exchange

Five Alberta 4-H delegates will participate in the Royal Bank 4-H Interprovincial Exchange beginning July 2, 1996. This exchange, sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada, gives young adults from across Canada the chance to travel and experience another province's lifestyle.

"The delegates who will be representing Alberta on this exchange were chosen at Provincial 4-H Selections 1996," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The province can be very proud of these five talented and enthusiastic 4-H members."

The five members are Bobbie Rae Sewall of Patricia who will visit Manitoba; Jenny Thomson of Wainwright who will visit New Brunswick; Christina Nodder of Drumheller who will visit Nova Scotia; Laura Holt of Lloydminster who will visit Ontario; and Jennifer McDonald of Stony Plain who will visit Prince Edward Island.

Before leaving on their exchange, delegates will meet in Calgary for a send-off banquet sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada and then fly to their host province. Once they arrive in their host province, the delegates will join other out-of-province delegates and attend a welcoming reception. Each delegate will then stay with two host families for the remainder of their trip. This will give them a chance to experience the various lifestyles and cultures of that province.

The Alberta delegates will return home on July 16th, 1996.

For further information, contact Bobbie Rae Sewall (403)378-4769; Jenny Thomson (403)842-2409; Christina Nodder (403)772-2192; Laura Holt (403)875-8485; and Jennifer McDonald (403)963-3770.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403)948-8510

Exchange rate forward contracts

The use of agricultural commodity futures is increasing as producers and agri-businesses reduce price risk by locking in a price for their commodity in the future. Often U.S. commodity futures are used to lock in prices. This secures a U.S. price, yet leaves the risk of a change in the U.S./Canadian exchange rate. The use of an exchange rate forward contract can reduce the risk of changing currencies.

A livestock producer could lock in a U.S. price for cattle in March of $0.63 per pound for September. At the current exchange rate of $0.72 U.S., the Canadian equivalent price would be $0.875 per pound Canadian ($0.63 ÷ $0.72 = $0.875). If the exchange rate moved to $0.75 U.S. by October, when the cattle would be sold, the Canadian price would only be $0.84 per pound ($0.63 ÷ $0.75 = $0.84), a loss of $0.035 per pound.

"There are several ways to lock in an exchange rate, from the use of futures and options to using your local bank," says Dalin Bullock, marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Using a bank can be a simple way to protect yourself from exchange risk without the fear of margin calls or option premiums."

Most banks will offer an Exchange Rate Forward Contract, a *Forward,* for any currency. A forward has three components: amount and type of currency to be exchanged; exchange rate; and the date the exchange will take place.

"We go through these same three steps each time we exchange money at the bank," says Bullock. "We choose the type and amount of money we want to exchange and the bank offers the exchange rate. In most cases we want the transaction to take place immediately, but we could specify some date in the future."

There are several *forward* variations used. One is often called a Swap Transaction (ST), which exchanges one currency for another on a certain date at the current exchange rate (spot) and exchanged back (swap) at a fixed rate.

Cont'd on page 4

For example, consider cattle that will go to market in September. The October Futures is at $0.63 per pound and you feel that it will go down between now and September when the cattle are sold. You sell October futures at $0.63 per pound and now want to fix the exchange rate. Go to the bank and see what exchange rate they will guarantee for September. If the rate is acceptable, you can lock it in. By using an ST you have the bank purchase U.S. dollars in September at the current exchange rate (spot) in the amount of the contract value ($0.63 x 40,000 pounds equals $25,200); then have the U.S. funds swapped back into Canadian at the fixed rate set when the contract was signed. If the Canadian dollar increases in relation to the U.S. dollar between September and the time you entered into the contract, the transaction will be profitable and will offset the lower cattle prices in Canada due to the change in the exchange rate. On the other hand, if the value of the Canadian dollar decreases in relation to the U.S. dollar over the time of the contract, you will lose from the transaction, but the loss is offset by higher cattle prices here at home.

"Before you enter a *forward*, your bank may require some type of performance bond to cover the cost of possible losses," adds Bullock. "Don't assume that the exchange rate your bank offers you is carved in stone; a little negotiation could provide a better rate. Delivery date of the contract and when the exchange takes place can be a specific date or within a delivery window, up to a maximum of 30 days. The exchange rate quoted will be better for a specific date versus a window, as there is greater risk of the dollar moving during the time period of the window."

Forwards can provide a way to lock in the exchange rate for some time in the future. Make sure you completely understand any contract before committing yourself to its terms and conditions.

Contact: Dalin Bullock
(403)538-5285

Plan cuts to benefit your alfalfa stand

Winter was long and hard. With the current situation, alfalfa hay is in short supply. Producers must plan carefully and manage their hay to get the most out of this year's growing season.

"Hay land is sometimes taken for granted. But after the severe winter we had, some alfalfa stands didn't survive," says Gordon Frank, crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Cutting at the right time during plant development stages will lead to a healthy hay crop next year."

It seems to be a common occurrence in Alberta to take the first cutting to late and the next cuts too early in the crop development stage. Timing is everything to ensure healthy root systems which, in turn, give abundant forage.

Root reserves are used in varying proportions at different growth stages. Out of the total root reserves 20 - 30 per cent is used for spring regrowth, 20 - 30 per cent for full regrowth, and 40 - 50 per cent for overwintering.

"Monitoring field development is the key to knowing when to cut and when to wait just a little longer," adds Frank. "Pioneer Hi Bred Limited put together some helpful tips that may help you plan your cuts."

If you have a healthy stand, take the first cutting at the stage of development when you normally would. However, if a stand was winter-damaged (slow to start growing), but has survived, it may be beneficial to delay cutting until some flowers are present. This will allow the depleted root system to build up.

When planning the second or third cut, let the alfalfa grow long enough so that some flowers are present. The more a stand is cut in a season, the more the root reserves are depleted. Even the toughest varieties cannot tolerate short cutting intervals and hard winters. The last cutting should be timed so there are at least five to six weeks before a killing frost.

Higher stubble should be left on the last cut to catch snow and enhance survival. Some producers leave uncut strips every 20 to 40 metres as natural snow fences.

If you are dealing with a new stand, it is advisable to cut them when they are six to eight inches high. This promotes stem growth, increasing the amount of photosynthetic area. The new stand will have an better chance of survival if its nutrient developing and storing capabilities are enhanced.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

Growing more than food, Growing Alberta

The *Growing Alberta* campaign, launched April 22, 1996, is making its presence known. Billboards with the *Growing Alberta* message are now up in Edmonton and Calgary. Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie transit busses are also carrying the message.

"Radio advertising began an eight week run in May," says Barb Shackel-Hardman, conservation awareness specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The first of the planned print ads appeared in Reader's Digest, Macleans, Chatelaine, Western Living and Canadian Living in May and will also be in the June issues. We are very pleased with the impression these ads are making. They really tell the story."

Several media outlets are also airing *Growing Alberta* public service announcements including CKSA TV in Lloydminster, 2/7 TV in Lethbridge and CKKY Radio in Wainwright.

Cont'd on page 5

"Since the launch, support for the program has increased considerably," says Jim Waters, program manager for *Growing Alberta*. "To date, 39 agricultural service boards have provided financial contributions. It is encouraging that the industry sees the value and benefits an awareness campaign like this will produce.

"Several other organizations are supporting the program through in-kind donations. So be prepared to see the Growing Alberta logo and messages on all sorts of agricultural and agri-food products."

Market research indicates that the urban public have a low awareness of the diversity of Alberta's agriculture and food industry and the impact it has on the Alberta economy, environment and quality of life. Urban Albertans also have concerns about the use of chemicals in food production and processing, soil degradation, water quality and the affect agriculture has on wildlife.

"*Growing Alberta* was developed to address urban Albertans concerns and build a greater awareness of the benefits of the industry," adds Waters. "We thank all of the organizations who already support the program, and would encourage others to get in touch with us if they want to become involved. There are many ways to support Growing Alberta."

Currently supporters include:

- Alberta Cattle Commission
- Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen
- Zeneca Seeds
- AgrEvo
- Alberta Wheat Pool
- Alberta Chapter, Canadian Seed Growers Association
- Alberta Chicken Producers
- Alberta Barley Commission
- Canada Safeway
- Alberta Conservation Tillage Society
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- UFA
- Winnipeg Commodity Exchange
- Beatrice Foods
- Alberta Market Gardeners Association; and
- 39 agricultural service boards.

Contact: *Barb Shackel-Hardman* *(403)427-3819*
Jim Waters *(403)231-1615*

Agri-News Briefs

Take a tour of the direct seeding site

June 27 is the opening day for the Red Deer Direct Seeding site. The site is one kilometre west of Highway #2 on 32 Street (C&E Trail). The event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with plot tours running all day. Demonstration plots, showing direct seeding technology, are situated around the 40 acre site that compares direct and conventional seeding. "Openers, fertilizer placement, surface applied granular herbicides, direct seeded forages, seed depth, seeding rates, row spacing, pre-seed burnoff, Roundup Ready Canola, pocket gopher control and delay haying for wildlife are a few of the featured plots," says Russel Horvey, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's regional conservation coordinator in Red Deer. "This site will help farmers answer some of the questions they have about direct seeding." Ducks Unlimited and Monsanto have adjacent sites and are part of the tour. Viridian (Sherritt), Westco, DowElanco, Conservation and Development, the Counties of Red Deer and Lacombe and the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre will also be on hand. Farmers and retailers are encouraged to visit the site on June 27. The site will be open for self-guided tours all season. For more information, contact Russel Horvey at (403)340-5329 or Karen Yakimishyn at (403)340-5325.

Cont'd on page 6

Bringing information to life

New video releases available for sale or loan from Alberta Agriculture district video libraries and from the central Multi-Media library in Edmonton:

- *Agriculture: Alberta's Advantage* – A well-designed promotional tool for the entire agriculture and food industry. Alberta has the advantage!
- *Public Land in Alberta: Common Ground* – Join host and rancher Grant Klaiber on a tour of Alberta public lands. See how they're being managed for our future benefit.
- *Outstanding in Your Field: Diagnosing Crop Problems*: New version includes segment illustrating the growth stages of cereal crops.
- *Safe and Perfect Burn* – Learn the necessary steps for a safe and successful burn! Features Alberta Agriculture's Henry Najda.
- *Weed Control for Field Peas* – See how you can enhance our soil quality and farm profits by controlling weeds in this sensitive crop.
- *Biotechnology: A Quick Dip in the Gene Pool*: Discussion starter for high school students (and others) on this exciting, promising and sometimes controversial new field.
- *Dormant-Season Grazing* – Share the experiences of cattle producers who use dormant-season grazing as part of their cattle operations.
- *Effects of Livestock on Water Quality* – Good clean water... it's part of the Alberta Advantage. Find out what cattle producers can do to help keep it that way.
- *Ground Openers* (Systems for direct seeding) – Alberta Agriculture machine specialist Murray Green shows you how best to choose your next opener.
- *World Trading Game*: Opportunities in Trade – Watch out Wheel of Fortune! This latest series installment uses a game show to illustrate where the real opportunities are in the future of food.
- *Woodlot Management* – Ensure a long-tem supplemental income for your farm operation . . . plus all the benefits of a healthy sustainable forest for future generations.
- CAESA Public Service Announcements – "Who Am I?" – Three T.V. spots made to support CAESA's public awareness program. Great for meeting openers! Loan only.
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Canadian Federation of Agriculture Television Public Service Announcements – More PSAs guaranteed to liven up any gathering. Loan only.

Orders for these, or up to 250 other videos may be placed at any Alberta Agriculture district office, or by contacting the multi-media library. Videos bring information to life! For further information, or a complete catalogue of Alberta Agriculture's video presentations, contact Ken Blackley at the multi-media library in Edmonton (403)422-3951.

Hort Week '96 – a chance to learn from the experts!

On July 21 to 26, dozens of seminars, short courses and workshops in horticulture and floriculture are being presented by top industry professionals during the 32nd Annual Hort Week event at Olds College. Everyone from beginner to expert can learn something valuable at the seminars. Hort week offers the chance to learn practical skills, explore new directions and acquire up-to-date information of new developments in the industry. The popular Commercial and Leisure Floral Design Schools will be offered again, as well as workshops in home decor floral design, wedding design, retailing, and merchandising. To name a few, experts presenting the seminars and workshops include: Jim Turley, BSc Ag, Turley's Florist of Nanaimo, BC; Marion J. Frantz, BFA, BEd, Operations Design Group of Calgary; Patricia Scrivener, AIFD of Calgary; and Barbara L. Wyman, Prairie Everlasting of Flaxcombe, Saskatchewan. For more information about any of this year's Hort Week courses, call Olds College Extension Services at (403)556-4677.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 1, 1996

CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

Special crop may find a niche in Alberta

A special crop for Alberta may be garlic seed (cloves). The 'stinking rose' has been grown for centuries as a food, condiment and medicine. Use of garlic (*Allium sativum*) was recorded as early as 2900 B.C. inside the pyramid of Cheops in Egypt.

"The use of garlic in the kitchen is well known, but recent reports concerning the medicinal value of the crop have encouraged new demand," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder and agronomist with the New Crop Development Unit of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It is reported that several compounds in garlic may help in fighting off infection, lowering blood pressure and reducing cholesterol, in addition to a wide range of other claims. Some of the garlic products available in health food and drug stores include odourless garlic extract, garlic oil capsules and dried garlic tablets. There is no doubt that the sale of garlic based products has increased dramatically in the past five years."

Several options are open to potential garlic producers. The most obvious is selling into the culinary market. However, this is usually a small and very competitive local market. Other possibilities include contracting with an established garlic processor or developing a private label garlic product.

Product development would demand a large amount of research, organization, planning and financing. Many of the garlic processors are interested in obtaining organic garlic, which must be produced on land which has undergone one of the recognized certification processes. Another option is to contact an existing herbal supplement processor who may be interested in adding garlic products to their line.

There has been a limited amount of information generated on the prairies concerning garlic production. Cultivar selection and time of planting are currently being studied in Alberta. General information on cultural practices, weed and pest control and harvesting/storing methods is available in extension pamphlets and reports.

A note of caution, garlic marketing is dictated by supplies of garlic that are coming from China which significantly undercut local prices. Both the United States and Canada are investigating whether this action could be characterized as dumping; a charge which China denies.

Although there are several positive reasons to believe that there is potential for increased garlic production in Alberta, much will depend on what happens in the international marketing of this commodity.

Contact: *Stan Blade*
(403)422-1789
E-mail: blade@agric.gov.ab.ca

This Week

Special crop may find a niche in Alberta 1
Distinguished Service Awards presented by the AHEA 2
"Just irrigatin' in the rain" 2
A 10 month check on the food safety info line 2
Diversification in action tours 3
Alberta delegates off to the Montana 4-H Congress 4
4-Hers to attend Operation Enterprise 4
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Distinguished Service Awards presented by the AHEA

On May 25, 1996 at the Alberta Home Economics Association (AHEA) annual meeting, Suzanne Tenold, foods and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, was honoured with a Distinguished Service Award. Tenold received the award for introducing the idea of the Food Safety Information Line to the Association and seeking opportunities to help the project get up and running. Other members of the AHEA Food line committee also received an award for their volunteer work ensuring the project met the goals and objectives set out by the Association.

"Many Albertans don't know how to contact Alberta food companies and commodity organizations if they have a question about the safe handling or storing of the foods they've bought," explains Tenold. "Providing consumers with access to this information at no cost to them keeps the lines of communication open. If shoppers find that they have to call a food company long distance to have their questions answered, chances are they will choose not to purchase the product or they might rely on information from friends or neighbours, which may not be correct. A bad experience with a food will often result in no further purchases and poor publicity."

A timely and innovative idea, the Food Safety Information Line enables Albertans to access food safety information through a toll-free 1-800 call and bridges the gap for many of Alberta's agri-food industries not yet able to offer a toll-free service for their customers.

Not only do callers have their questions answered, but they receive regular safe food handling tips and ideas they might not have considered. Addresses and telephone numbers of food companies and commodity organizations are also available to those consumers who want more specific information concerning a particular product.

The Food Safety Information Line (1-800-892-8333 or 287-0098 in Calgary) has been a remarkable success since its inception in June 1995. "The Home Economics and 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture has been able to use the many calls received to identify Albertan's safety concerns and determine the food safety information they need," says Tenold. "We have been very encouraged with the number of calls and the calibre of questions that have come through the line."

AHEA hopes to continue the service and maintain the key links with Alberta's Agri-food industry.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
(403)948-8504

Food Safety Information Line
1-800-892-8333 or
287-0098 in Calgary

"Just irrigatin' in the rain!"

It's a summer day and a gentle but steady rain is falling on the land and crops in southern Alberta. Many of these lands are irrigated and, much to the surprise of passers-by, are actually being irrigated as it's raining.

To the average person travelling by, this often seems like a waste of water and can appear very inefficient. "Not so," says Wally Chinn, head of the Farm Irrigation Management Section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In fact, this can often be the most efficient time to irrigate! Most beneficial precipitation events in southern Alberta don't exceed 10 to 15 mm of moisture. In late June and through July, that's about as much water as most good crops will use up in less than two days."

During these peak moisture use times, the reality for the irrigation farmer is that, his irrigation system can't usually keep up to the water demand of the crop, so the irrigator depends on a reserve of stored soil moisture within the root zone to get his crop through this high stress period.

"The soil water reserve can vary from 60 to 140 mm of readily available moisture for the crop," adds Chinn. "An average rainfall helps a bit but doesn't go nearly far enough to maintain this amount of moisture reserve. The irrigation system running in conjunction with a rainfall event makes for complimentary moisture build-up.

"Gains in water application efficiency are made by irrigating while rain is falling because of the high relative humidity in the air. Less evaporation of the irrigation water as it's applied and less surface evaporation means more moisture stored in the soil root zone."

So the next time you are driving through an irrigated area on a rainy day, don't be too concerned about those irrigation systems running out in the fields. It merely reflects a good irrigator attempting to supply his crops' water requirements more effectively by building up stored soil moisture.

"And let's not forget," says Chinn, "most irrigators know the value of water in their area. They certainly don't want to pay the high cost of pumping irrigation water on a crop if it is going to be wasted."

Contact: Wally Chinn
(403)381-5515

A 10 month check on the food safety info line

The Food Safety Information Line is clearly recognized as a reliable source of consumer information and has received accolades from across the country. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, in cooperation with the Alberta Home

Cont'd on page 3

Economics Association (AHEA), continues to resource the service, providing materials and training to ensure that Albertans have the most up to date information about the foods they buy.

As of April 12, 1996 (10 months of operation), Alberta's Food Safety Information Line answered more than 1850 questions concerning the quality and safe handling of food products.

"Callers have asked about all types of food products," says Suzanne Tenold, foods and nutrition specialist with the Home Economics and 4-H Branch of Agriculture. "The questions have represented a real cross section of issues but the highest number of calls have been in the processed foods and vegetable categories."

The 10 month summary of calls shows that Albertans are very interested in the safe handling and storing of the food they buy. In addition, a significant number of questions about shelf life and labelling regulations were received.

"The calls help us identify areas where stores and producers could improve on the information they provide and the way they provide it," adds Tenold. "Consumers would benefit from more in-store information and labels that are easy to read and clearly presented. Many consumers asked about shelf life and storage of various processed food products. Proper storage of deli products, especially meats, questions about additives and signs of spoilage were common."

As proper vegetable storage can be the factor that ensures product quality, it is not surprising than consumers continue to ask how to store their vegetable purchases. Questions about pesticide use on vegetables have also been answered.

The statistics concerning the questions received are added to the food line data bank and compiled by food and nutrition specialists in the department.

"The Food Safety Information Line was started to provide Albertans with direct access to accurate, current and reliable food safety information and to research the food safety issues that concern Albertans. It is definitely fulfilling those two goals," says Tenold. "Albertans have recognized the expertise of Agriculture's professional home economists in foods and nutrition for quite some time. The info line is a wonderful way to easily and quickly access that expertise."

Keep the 1-800-892-8333 (287-0098 in Calgary) Food Safety Information Line close at hand during the summer barbequing and camping season. Remember, most cases of food-borne illnesses are caused by mishandling of food by consumers.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
(403)948-8504

Diversification in action tours

If you've ever wondered what it takes to diversify your farm operation, three summer tours arranged by Business Development Specialists may provide the answers. The tours will focus on three separate diversification streams and will allow tour participants to view some highly successful operations.

The food processing facility tour was held on June 18, 1996 and featured the Patient Support Centre, Nutrition and Food Services, and Gramma Bears Home Baking. Patient Support Centre provides all meals for patients and residents of hospitals and nursing homes in the Capital Health Authority. They specialize in the development of preparation of speciality diet foods, minced and pureed foods. They have also provided co-packing services for seven food companies, but will be withdrawing from those as food service demands increase.

At Gramma Bears, hostess Evelyn Dickhout prepared and served a tasty meal of wild turkey gumbo soup, pheasant paté, cholesterol free cheese bread, a pheasant entree and blueberry or apple pie. All the products Evelyn served were developed in her inspection kitchen and are for sale through the Strathcona Farmer's Market. Participants enjoyed touring Evelyn's facility and, despite the rain, many ventured out to see the pheasants, quails and wild turkeys Evelyn raises and sells.

The second tour, rural tourism, is to the Onoway and Mayerthorpe area and include a morning visit to White's Fish Farm, a rainbow trout hatching and rearing facility. The tour moves on to Hog Wild Specialities in the afternoon. Here, hosts Deb and Earl Hagman will showcase their wild boar operation. Hagman's feature product is their wild boar smokie which scored well in the recent *Taste of Success* food challenge. The rural tourism tour is slated for July 18, 1996.

The final tour is devoted to dried and specialty flower operations. On September 5, 1996 the tour will head to Sun Drieds flowers near Leduc. Lorna Stephen, a well-known instructor at the Devonian Gardens and Olds College grows dried flowers for the local market and can give many tips on growing and marketing. The last stop in the afternoon is in Edmonton for a visit to Heartland Freeze-Dried Botanicals Ltd. This company started as a home based business featuring freeze-dried flowers. They now sell arrangements and conduct classes using freeze dried flowers and vegetables. They have perfected a method that provides a protective coating for the flowers which makes them more durable in arrangements.

Each tour costs $25/participant and will include lunch, beverage breaks and transportation from either Westlock or Morinville. For more information or to register contact one of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's business development specialists, Janice McGregor in Morinville, phone 939-4351 or Kerry Engel in Westlock, phone 349-4465.

Contact: Janice McGregor (403)939-4351
Kerry Engel (403)349-4465

Alberta delegates off to the Montana 4-H Congress

Four Alberta 4-H delegates and two chaperones will soon be leaving on a trip to Bozeman, Montana to participate in the annual Montana 4-H Congress. This trip is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The group will leave on July 7, 1996 and will travel through southern Alberta and Montana to Bozeman. Before the congress, the group will spend two days travelling through Montana visiting different historical and agricultural points of interest.

The four delegates, chosen at 4-H Selections 1996 in Olds, are Calvin Kozak of Hardisty; Shelly Menzak of Ranfurly; Sandy Munns of Craigmyle and Carmen Webber of Okotoks. The staff chaperone this year is Carol Sullivan, the provincial 4-H communication and marketing specialist. The leader chaperone is Barb Bond of Lethbridge.

Once at the congress, the group will participate in workshops, educational programs, and a variety of social events and will have the chance to observe various 4-H project competitions.

After the congress, the group will make their way north and return to Alberta on July 14, 1996.

Contact:	*Marguerite Stark*	*Carol Sullivan*
	(403)948-8510	*(403)427-4499*
	Calvin Kozak	*(403)879-2240*
	Shelly Menzak	*(403)658-2128*
	Sandy Munns	*(403)665-2431*
	Carmen Webber	*(403)938-3264*

4-Hers to attend Operation Enterprise

On July 6, 1996, two Alberta 4-H delegates will travel to Lloydminster, Saskatchewan where they will take part in the business management program, *Operation Enterprise*.

Located at the Lloydminster campus of Lakeland College, *Operation Enterprise* is an extensive business management seminar designed to help delegates become stronger managers and leaders, help with career decisions, and set personal goals.

Rachel Sawatzky of Didsbury and Anne Johncox of Rimbey will be the two Alberta 4-H delegates attending the seminar. Sawatzky is sponsored by AEC Pipelines and Johncox is sponsored by the Nelson Lumber Foundation.

After 10 days of small group discussions, workshops and one-to-one discussions with top executives from the business world, they will return home on July 15, 1996.

Contact:	*Marguerite Stark*	
	(403)948-8510	
	Rachel Sawatzky	*(403)335-4285*
	Anne Johncox	*(403)843-6844*

Agri-News Briefs

White rot and the current garlic situation

Due to infection by white rot, California's Gilroy area is not the garlic capital of North America anymore. Nevada now produces 1600 acres of garlic for commercial and seed uses. White rot is now infesting the Nevada production areas. "In 2001, when the soil fumigant methyl bromide will no longer be available as a herbicide, garlic and onion producers will face several production problems," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "If we can keep white rot out of Alberta and develop the necessary production techniques, garlic production could be an viable opportunity for Alberta farmers." For further information, contact Dr. Stan Blade at (403)422-1789.

Seed training for Registered Seed Establishments

To provide training in the handling, sampling, grading and labelling of pedigreed seed for operators and graders of Registered Seed Establishments, Olds College is offering three workshops this year. On August 6 - 8 and again on September 9 - 11, 1996, a workshop on seed analysis and grading will be offered. Recommended procedures for grading cereal seed samples and other crop kinds will be demonstrated. On September 11 - 13, 1996, a specialized workshop on seed analysis of grasses and legumes is scheduled. Recommended procedures of analysis of grasses and legume seed, including purity analysis, weed seed identification, grading expectations, understanding and application of a certified certificate will be covered at the workshop. For information on registration and fees, contact the Educational Development Centre at Olds College (403)556-8321.

Poinsettia production and management workshop

No, it's not too early to be thinking of Christmas! At least not if one of your crops is poinsettia. Beginner and advanced poinsettia growers who want to increase their knowledge and skills and growers who want to improve the quality and shelf life of their plants will want to attend this workshop. The workshop will be held on July 18, 1996 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Crop Diversification Centre North, 17507 Fort Road, Edmonton. Registration is $53.50 per person (make cheques payable to the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association) and pre-registration is required. The program will cover areas of interest including: controlling the greenhouse environment; choosing poinsettia cultivars; scheduling the growing period; growing media, fertilizer, watering practices and growth regulation; and poinsettia diseases and insect control. The workshop is organized by the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For further information, contact Dr. M. Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, at (403)422-1789. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame

They have demonstrated leadership in farm, rural or commodity organizations. They are leaders in the food industry and have demonstrated that leadership at the provincial, national or international level and benefitted Alberta in a significant way. They have made an outstanding contribution to agricultural development and to the quality of rural life in the province. These are the people eligible for the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame. Candidates must be nominated by three people, not members of their immediate family. Organizations may make or support nominations. Nominations must be received on or before July 31, 1996. Send nomination forms to Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame, c/o Communications Division, 100A, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. All nominations are reviewed by a Selection Committee chosen to represent the agriculture industry. Do you know someone who deserves to be acknowledged? Nomination forms are available at all Agriculture offices or by contacting Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Communications Division, (403)427-2121.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 8, 1996

CANADIANA

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Around the world in a single growing season

Many of the traditional crops grown in Alberta were brought here from somewhere else in the world. Evaluating crops from other parts of the world and paying closer attention to native plants will help to identify even more alternate crops to diversify Alberta production.

"The special crops program at the Crop Diversification Centre (CDC) North is the location for a wide range of pulse and special crops trials in 1996," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Crop diversification has become increasingly more important to the agriculture and agri-food industries."

Some of the experiments being done at CDC North this year include:

1. Field pea screening – 900 field pea lines are being grown to identify useful traits to be used in developing improved field pea cultivars with better harvestability and yield for this region. A second trial is designed to measure the response of 15 registered field pea lines to excessive moisture by controlled irrigation;
2. Pulse varietal testing – several trials including the newly registered (1996) field pea lines, fababeans and lentils are planted at CDC North. Advanced field pea lines from both the Morden (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and Saskatoon (University of Saskatchewan) breeding programs are also being tested on site;
3. Special field crops – a demonstration site has been set up for a wide range of alternate field crops which are being evaluated for their potential in Alberta. Canaryseed, including the soon-to-be-released hairless cultivar; herbs; spices and 25 other unique special crops, such as fenugreek, borage, Austrian winter pea, and lathyrus, are being grown at the Centre. Field experiments to identify agronomic practices for biennial caraway production (testing annual caraway, coriander, canola and field peas as nurse crops) and fenugreek productivity are underway;
4. Medicinal plants – the ginseng at the Centre is going into its third year of growth. Small plots of other popular medicinal plants, including three species of echinacca, feverfew, arnica, ephedra, psyllium and a host of others, are also being grown; and
5. Culinary herbs – a small demonstration garden showing a number of culinary herbs, including several types of basil, thyme, parsley, summer savory and a large assortment of other types of herbs, is planted. Both transplanting and direct seeding are being used to evaluate growing potential in north-central Alberta.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Around the world in a single growing season 1

A flavourful floral feast 2

Final 4-H destination – Yellowknife 2

Adding value and launching new products 3

More than just a 'hill o' beans' 3

Extra pasture 4

Alberta hosts five 4-H interprovincial exchange delegates 5

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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CDC North (formerly called the Alberta Tree Nursery) is located on the northeast edge of Edmonton. The special crops program also has a number of off-site locations. In collaboration with George Clayton, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, two sites, Vegreville and Calahoo, are used to evaluate the effectiveness of liquid, peat-based and granular field pea inoculants. A site at Vermilion is being used to evaluate new field pea and lentil lines. There are also approximately 15 alternate crops observation trails spread across the province for those interested in taking a self-guided tour.

"Several tours which include the special crops program at CDC North will be held during the summer," adds Blade. "We have identified August 1, 1996 as the Special Crops Field Day to be held at CDC North from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Information sheets describing the history, production and marketing of the array of crops on display will be available. Everyone is welcome to come and have a look at some of the potential plant species we are evaluating at the Centre."

Contact: Dr. Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

A flavourful floral feast

Imagine a wedding cake decorated with flowers that taste as wonderful as they look, white chocolate mousse served in a gladiola flower or tulip (stamens and pistils removed) surrounded by sugared violets, or a colourful sprinkling of pansies added to a tossed salad. The possibilities are endless, and intriguing enough to spark the interest of even the least adventurous cook.

Edible flowers were once 'all the rage'. They graced the tables and plates of kings and queens. In salads or as a low-calorie garnish in soups and beverages, using flowers, is making a come-back. If you're looking for a creatively simple way to add a bit of colour and a dash of mystery, you may not have to look further than your flower beds.

"If you're looking for new ways to liven up your table, you might want to experiment with flowers," says Shelley Barkley. "Both petals, whole or chopped into colourful confetti, and whole flowers can be used to add unique flavour and intriguing aroma. Not all flowers are edible, in fact there are some which are poisonous, so you may want to consult culinary books or other sources for lists of flowers which are safe to eat."

Summer presents so many taste opportunities for the daily menu. Fresh oregano, dill, chives, sage and thyme have always been appreciated as those 'little extra' ingredients only enjoyed in the warmer months. Well, add bee balm, borage, calendula, daylily, fuchsia, gladiolus and nasturtium to the list.

"Before you snip off all of the blooms from your snapdragons, try one. Not all flowers taste the same, so try them to determine which ones you want to 'harvest'," adds Barkley. "Flowers are best when fresh. Collect the blooms early in the day, when the dew is still on them or has almost dried. The petals may be rather fragile so handle with care toavoid bruising. Wash them, if necessary, and pat dry gently."

You can store flower petals and blooms in plastic bags or tightly sealed glass jars in the refrigerator until needed. Shelf life for flowers is about one week if handled and stored carefully. Be sure to use only flowers that are free of chemical pesticides.

"Roses of any variety are edible. Rose petals, candied, sugared or simply strewn in a punch bowl, add something ethereal," says Barkley. "The base of rose petals are quite bitter, so it is advisable to trim the petals to remove the whitish base. Most flowers that have hard centres, such as roses and chrysanthemums, can be pared so only the petals of the flowers are used."

So which flowers can grace not just our tables, but our plates? A partial list includes: apple blossom, anise-hyssop, bachelor button, basil, bee balm, borage, broadbean, calendula, carnation, chamomile, chicory, chives, chrysanthemum, daisies, dandelion, elderberry, English daisy, English primrose, fuchsia, geranium, gladiolus, honey suckle, jasmine, johnny-jump-up, lavender, lemon balm, lemon verbena, lilac, kale, mint (all varieties), mustard, nasturtium, pansies, pineapple sage, rappini, roses, sweet violet, thyme, tulip and violet.

Most flower beds boast at least a few edible flowers. If you're feeling daring and adventurous, reward yourself with not just the scent but the taste of a few blooms.

Contact: Shelly Barkley
(403)362-3391

Final 4-H destination – Yellowknife

On July 18 - 28, 1996 a group of 4-Hers leave Edmonton with Yellowknife as their most northerly destination. This tour is designed to increase awareness of agricultural diversity in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Alberta Treasury Branches is the major sponsor of this event.

"Camping en route, the 4-Hers purchase Alberta products wherever possible, visit agricultural processing and production facilities, and identify Alberta products available in the Northwest Territories," says Marguerite Stark, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's provincial 4-H programs specialist.

Karalee Aaserud, Craigmyle; Kaye Andrews, Nanton; Ellen Belanger, Morinville; Jason Bishell, Veteran; Candace Boyne, Wembley; Allison Curtis, Heisler; Trevor Dyer, Bowden; Nathan Eshpeter, Daysland; Sharon Gould, Nanton; JoAnne Henderson, Vimy; Corre Mahan, Nanton; Ken Miller, Markerville;

Cont'd on page 3

Keith Mulyk, Radway; Diane Murphy, Altario; Graham Olson, Athabasca; Jason Rach, Madden; Jill Russell, Drumheller; Carla Schlenker, Dunmore; Tanya Semeniuk, Evansburg; Mark Shand, Cremona; Amber Smart, Mannville; Heather Smid, Rocky Mountain House; Kevin Stretch, Vulcan; and Nolan Ziebarth, Wetaskiwin are the participants. Stacy Murray, regional 4-H specialist from Fairview, and leader chaperones Ed Pimm, Grimshaw and Lois Taylor, Didsbury will accompany the group.

Tour participants were chosen at the annual 4-H Selections program held at Olds College earlier this year. Trip awards are based on community and 4-H involvement as well as interpersonal skills.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403)948-8510

Stacy Murray
(403)835-2241 or
1-800-449-2106

Adding value and launching new products

Agriculture's story is more than grain waving in the field or cattle grazing in a pasture. A lot of the story happens after the crop is harvested - it's the value added to the commodity as it is made into a product consumers want to purchase. Product development is truly a partnership between the producers, the researchers, the entrepreneurs and the processors.

"An excellent example of adding value by developing a great product is Nutri-Tech," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Advanced Nutri-Tech Systems Inc. saw a need for a nutritious food bar that could be a snack at school, a supplementary food or an easily transported and stored food for use in emergency situations such as earthquakes and floods."

Saul Katz, the company's president, wanted to develop a wholesome, natural, healthy product that was low in fat, sugar and had no artificial agents. It had to provide a significant proportion of the nutrients needed by the consumer and had to be shelf stable without need of refrigeration.

In a joint venture with the University of Alberta Hospitals, a prototype for the food bar was developed. The U of A dietitians provided nutrition information to ensure a good ingredient list for the bars. It is a granola-type bar that uses grains, fruit, soya protein and milk products. As testing and development of the original recipe continued, so did the evaluation by the dietitians. Taste, texture and, of course, nutrititive value were scrutinized.

"To round out the partnership, staff at the Food Processing and Development Centre at Leduc brought their expertise to the mix," adds St. Onge. "The staff are food scientists with the equipment to research and develop new techniques for mixing together and packaging a new food product. Formulation of the food bar was refined. It couldn't be too chewy or too crumbly. Testing, including taste panels, helped identify several flavours for the bars."

Murray Fierheller, at the Leduc Centre, has done a lot of work with new packaging technology which eliminates oxygen and the process works for the Nutri-Tech bars. Lorea Ladner, also at the Leduc Centre, oversaw the nutritive analysis and labelling information.

Nutri-Tech is ready to market this new Alberta food product. A food product made as much as possible with ingredients grown in Alberta. Its formulation can be changed to meet many different needs in the global market.

"This is a typical value-added success story for Alberta's agri-food industry," says St. Onge. "Partnerships between producers, researchers, entrepreneurs and producers is working very well and it's how our future is going to look."

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-2412

Saul Katz
Advanced Nutri-Tech
Systems Inc.
(403)452-9546

More than just a 'hill o'beans'

The dry bean industry has expanded rapidly in the past 10 years. Over 35,000 acres were grown in southern Alberta in 1995 with a farm gate value of over $17 million.

"Irrigation farmers like the option of growing a non-Canadian Wheat Board crop that frequently has a high cash value," says Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's agronomy unit in Lethbridge. "Dry beans fit well into the overall farm management program in southern Alberta. Beans are a nitrogen fixing crop that increases residual nitrogen levels for subsequent crops, expands the crop rotation options and helps break weed and disease cycles."

With the increasing interest in bean production, a research project developed by Ross McKenzie, Refe Gaudiel and Beata Lees, was designed to look at improving the understanding of bean production in southern Alberta. The three main objectives of the study were:

- examine the responsiveness of commercial bean cultivars (pinto, red Mexican, pink and great northern) to rhizobium bacteria (granular and liquid) and determine the need for nitrogen fertilizer;
- correlate bean cultivar response to phosphate (P) fertilizer and to new P soil tests. A biological inoculant, Provide, is being examined to determine it's effect with beans; and
- examine the potential extent of zinc deficiency of beans to determine when responses will occur with each cultivar.

Cont'd on page 4

"We are in the last year of this three year project," adds McKenzie. "Last year, three sites were conducted at Bow Island (brown soil zone, Chin loam), Taber (brown soil zone, Cavendish sandy loam) and Coaldale (dark brown soil zone, Coaldale clay). In 1995, there was no yield response to either the granular or liquid inoculants at the three sites, similar to observations in 1994. This is quite different than we expected."

There was significant response to nitrogen fertilizer. In 1994, all three sites responded to added nitrogen fertilizer but there was limited response to the inoculants. In 1995, there was no significant response to either phosphate fertilizer or to Provide at any of the sites.

Response to phosphate fertilizer varied, and depended upon the P levels present in the soil. In 1994, sites at Vauxhall and Bow Island showed increased bean yields with added phosphate. There was no response to Provide.

"Both soil and foliar applied zinc treatments were examined on Pinto, Red Mexican, Pink and Great Northern beans as well as on Navy beans, which are the most sensitive to zinc deficiency," says McKenzie. "The1995 sites at Bow Island and Coaldale sites did not respond to added zinc while beans at the Taber site significantly responded to both soil and foliar applied zinc. The fact that the Taber site was quite sandy may have played a role in the response. Presently, we do not recommend zinc when soil test levels are higher than 1.0 ppm on any soil type. We may have to change that for sandy soils."

Research funding for this project is provided by the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, Westco, and Agrium Biologicals.

"Results have been somewhat different than anticipated and analysis of the data is continuing," says McKenzie. "Copies of the annual report, detailing the results to date, are available. We would be pleased to provide a copy upon request by calling the agronomy unit in Lethbridge at (403)381-5126."

The 1996 research plots will be included in the Alberta Pulse Growers commission tours in the Taber area on July 30, and Bow Island area on August 1, 1996.

Contact: *Dr. Ross McKenzie*
(403)381-5126
Beata Lees
(403)381-5125

Dr. Refe Gaudiel
(403)362-3391

Extra pasture

If pasture is going to be in short supply in your operation this year, using winter cereals may provide the extra grazing you require. Annuals and winter cereals have been used by many producers as a valuable tool for providing extra pasture, extra gain and extra profit.

"Winter cereals, such as fall rye, winter wheat or winter triticale, can be seeded and will provide extra pasture," says Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Seeding early, in the spring, gives good summer pasture. Delaying seeding until mid-August will give excellent fall pastures. Mixing a smaller amount of fall rye seed with your green feed or silage seed gives excellent grazing after the forages are harvested."

Being winter cereal, these crops need to go through a winter before they head out, so they stay vegetative all summer and fall. Regrowth on a winter cereal is very fast, resulting in good stocking rates. Adding nitrogen will increase stocking rates, but will add cost.

"Seed your winter cereals at a rate of about 110 lbs/acre," adds Yurchak. "Fertility is important, but high levels of nitrogen increase the risk of high nitrates in the fall after a frost. Soil testing will give you a better indication of what is needed and in what quantities."

Delay grazing until the winter cereal is at least six inches tall. This is usually five to six weeks after seeding. You can turn cows out two weeks earlier by adding 25 lbs of oats or barley to the seed. Oats and barley germinate and grow faster, which allows grazing about 14 days earlier, with the same six inches of growth.

"A winter cereal can have as high as 19 per cent protein, and can retain its quality well into November," says Yurchak. "It helps to pay attention to your pasture, particularly this year. Producers want to give their cows the very best pasture possible, and winter cereals could be part of this pasture."

Additional information is available from local Agriculture offices or by contacting Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6. Ask for a copy of the publication *Winter Cereals for Pasture*, Agdex #133/20-1.

Contact: *Trevor Yurchak*
(403)675-2252

Alberta hosts five 4-H interprovincial exchange delegates

On July 3, 1996, Angela Rock of St. Thomas, Ontario; Mary Ann Drummond of Hampton, New Brunswick; Bronwyn Crane of Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Katie Bishop of Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia; and Derek Wahl of Halbstadt, Manitoba arrived at the Calgary International Airport. The five out of province delegates arrived in Alberta to participate in the Royal Bank Inrerprovincial Exchange sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada.

At a 'Welcoming Breakfast' in Calgary on July 4, the Royal Bank of Canada coordinated a 'White Hat Presentation' for the delegates.

"The five delegates met their first Alberta host families on July 4, and will stay with that family until July 10," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They will then travel to the home of their second host families, staying there for the remainder of their visit, until July 16. All of the host families are involved with 4-H and are enthusiastic about showing the Alberta lifestyle to other Canadians."

Angela Rock is staying with the Wisniewski family of Hairy Hill and then with the Holt family of Lloydminster. The Webb family of Donalda is hosting Mary Ann Drummond for the first week before she visits the Murphy family of Altario. The Midtdal family of Westerose is enjoying their visit with Bronwyn Crane until she is hosted by the Adams family of Czar. Katie Bishop is visiting the Hadley family of Westlock and the Edge family of Cochrane. Derek Wahl is staying with the Olson family of Athabasca and then travels to Donalda to stay with the Webb family.

"Having two host families gives the delegates a wonderful opportunity to see various parts of Alberta and to meet more 4-H members," adds Stark. "The delegates will leave Alberta on July 16, 1996, travelling back to their home provinces."

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403)948-8510

Agri-News Briefs

Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

The proceedings of the first *Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference*, are now available. The conference was held at Olds College in March, 1996. The 250-page book, a compilation of 26 papers, contains a wealth of information presented by speakers from across Canada. Some of the topics covered include: trends in the production and marketing of medicinal plants in North America; varietal improvement of herbs; medicinal properties of ginseng; organic production of herbs; and marketing medicinal plants. Cost of the book is $25 (includes shipping, handling and GST). Information and order forms can be obtained directly from Olds College, Extension Services by calling (403)556-8321, or by fax at (403)556-4713.

90th Anniversary celebration in Lacombe

The Field Crop Development Centre in Lacombe is throwing open their doors, and gates, on Friday, July 26, 1996 in celebration of the 90th anniversary of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The Centre, which has been conducting research on crop development since 1973, is working on some exciting barley breeding programs that include new hulless and malt varieties. An early, six row cultivar (Kasota) is being tested and shows great potential, especially for the Peace Country. The two row barley program, malt barley varieties, are showing good disease resistance. Both spring (Pronghorn) and winter (Pika) varieties of Triticale can be viewed at the Centre. As well as tours of the research plots, the field day celebration includes a free barbeque for the first 150 people. For further information on this special event, contact Dave Dyson at (403)782-4641.

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Alternative crops – growing profit

If you have an interest in growing specialty crops on your farm, mark Monday, July 29, 1996 on your calendar. *Growing a Profit with Alternative Crops* tour/seminar will be held at the Crop Diversification Centre - North (CDC North) from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on that date. You'll have the chance to see many special crops, including some of the larger acreage species during the morning tour. Market potential, marketing process and investment requirements will be discussed. Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist, and other specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will be conducting the seminar and will all be on hand to answer questions. Pre-registration by July 24 is required. Cost of the seminar is $10 per person and includes lunch. Registration (name, address and phone number) should be sent to *Growing a Profit*, Provincial Building, Box 790, Three Hills, AB T0M 2A0. Include your cheque, made payable to the Provincial Treasurer. The CDC North is located at 17507 Fort Road, Edmonton. For further information on the tour/seminar and registration, contact Margo Lawrence, business development specialist in Camrose, at (403)679-1210 or Ellen Frombach, business development specialist in Three Hills, at (403)443-8525.

4-H Beef Heifer Show

The 20th annual Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show will be held in Bashaw, Alberta at the Bashaw Agricultural Society Grounds on July 14 - 16, 1996. "Entries are up 10 per cent from last year", says Henry Wiegman, 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development." There are 280 kids registered with 285 head of livestock. Total entries, all classes and categories, is 1350." The 4-H members entered represent 71 clubs, which is 30 per cent of all beef clubs throughout the province. Activities will include judging, team grooming, breed classes, interbreed conformation, herdsmanship competition, project bowl contest, showmanship, freshman classes, and information sessions. The event is sponsored by United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), Alberta Treasury Branches, Bashaw Agriculture Society and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Spectators are more than welcome. Event times are: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday, and 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

AGRI-NEWS

July 15, 1996

CANADIANA

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Paszkowski signs Memorandum of Cooperation with China

"Signing this Memorandum of Cooperation with Vice Minister Wu Yixia opens up new markets for Alberta producers. As The People's Republic of China develops an integrated beef industry, Alberta businesses will be right there," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD).

China is in the process of investing in a major expansion in beef production. Under the country's ninth Five-Year Plan, beef production is forecast to increase 150 per cent, from 1995 levels of 4 million tonnes to 10 million tonnes, requiring an estimated investment of over $1 billion.

"Alberta will play a major role in this development," said Mr. Paszkowski. "Through the support of AFRD, the Alberta beef industry will find commercial market opportunities for consulting services, feed and feed technology, cattle genetics, cattle, forage and forage seed, equipment and technology, as well as high quality Alberta beef products. China's need to develop an internationally competitive feed/forage to market system for beef will drive these opportunities."

The agreement establishes a direct cooperative relationship between the Government of Alberta and the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture. Overall, the document provides a framework for Alberta businesses to operate in China.

Alberta's interests are emphasized through the focus on aspects such as developing long-term, commercial relations and facilitating access to the Chinese market for Alberta companies.

The agreement was made possible by the strong working relationship between China and Alberta, including Alberta companies, especially through Alberta's assistance to her sister province Heilongjiang in pasture and beef development since the early 1980's. Mr. Paszkowski's recent trade mission to China reinforced the strength of those ties and brought this agreement to a successful outcome.

"Alberta's international reputation for high quality beef products and its relationships with China provide the opportunity for companies to significantly expand their

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Paszkowski signs Memorandum of Cooperation with China 1

Farmers' Markets, ripe with the pickin's 2

Canada/Alberta Agriculture Income Safety Net Agreement 2

When leasing land, get it in writing 3

Annual Food Tab receives rave reviews 3

Fire blight expert visits Alberta 4

Non-performance or herbicide resistance 5

Safe sprayer clean out 5

Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

business with China over the next decade," said Mr. Paszkowski. "When you consider that China's population of over 1.2 billion people is increasing by around 15 million people per year and its economy is growing at close to 10 percent annually, you can see that the opportunities for the agriculture industry are tremendous."

Contact: *Ron Glen*
Executive Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(403)427-2137

Bob Prather – Senior Trade Director
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(403)422-7213

Farmers' Markets, ripe with the pickin's

An impressive array of fresh vegetables, fruits and berries are available at Farmers' Markets right now, and within a few weeks, most produce grown in Alberta will be in season. So, the time is ripe for a celebration of market gardens and farmers' markets. During the week of July 21 - 27, 1996, the Alberta Farmers' Market Association will be promoting the markets with special events and features throughout the province.

"The theme for the week is *Enjoy a fresh taste from Alberta Farmers' Markets*," says Judy Lavoie, chairperson for the Alberta Farmers' Market Association. "There are over 100 markets operating in Alberta and a number of them are planning special promotions for this week. Days and times of operation, as well as information on what your farmers' market has planned for the week, are advertised in the local media."

Alberta markets provide quality homemade, homegrown and handcrafted items unique to the communities where they originate. The markets are also a great meeting place for the community and an opportunity to discover and purchase Alberta products.

"Consumers can expect to find just about anything from 'soup to nuts' at the markets," adds Lavoie. "Homebaked goods are abundant. Jams, jellies, pickles, pies, fresh farm eggs, homemade sausage and meats as well as many different crafts and homemade clothing are always available."

Visiting your local Farmers' Market is part of the summer experience. As many of the larger markets have entertainment during their operation, the whole family can make it a day's event.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has published the *1996 Alberta Farmers' Markets* guide which lists 100 markets, their location and days of operation. It also lists unique market features such as children's markets and special seasonal features.

Copies of the guide can be picked up at your local Agriculture district office or obtained through the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Judy Lavoie*
(403)672-3270

Canada/Alberta Agricultural Income Safety Net Agreement

"The Alberta and federal governments have signed a series of bilateral agreements on an income safety net for the agriculture sector," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD).

"These agreements are a very positive outcome for Alberta's agriculture industry," added Ralph Goodale, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "I am very pleased to see these agreements become reality – as part of our national efforts to establish and implement a solid, long-term Canada-wide framework for all agricultural safety nets."

This series of five agreements is significant because the documents set out the components of the agriculture safety net in Alberta for the next few years.

The Canada-Alberta Framework Agreement on Agricultural Safety Nets is the same agreement being signed by all the provinces. Essentially, the document provides a common objective and a set of principles for both the federal and provincial governments in their delivery of safety net programs across Canada. The agreement also outlines the management and allocation of federal funds in safety net programs.

The other four agreements are specific to Alberta; they include the Canada-Alberta Agricultural Safety Nets Management Agreement, the Canada-Alberta Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) Companion Agreement, the Canada-Alberta Agreement on the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) and the Canada-Alberta Arable Acres Supplementary Payment Agreement.

The programs affected by these agreements include NISA, crop insurance, FIDP, cash advances, transitional funding following the elimination of red meat National Tripartite Stabilization Program (NTSP) plans, and the creation of sector and industry development funds.

The agreements also provide for a payment on rotational cropping acres not covered by the federal Western Grain Transition Payment Program in Alberta. Details of this program will be announced after consultation with industry.

The Alberta Safety Net Coalition, a group made up of representatives of Alberta farm and commodity organizations, had a major influence on the components of the safety net.

Cont'd on page 3

The agreements were developed to meet the need for a comprehensive safety net made up of programs that are effective in providing support when farm income is severely reduced. The reduction must stem from reasons beyond the farmer's control. The development fund agreements are designed to produce lasting benefits to farmers through research and market development.

The programs do not influence farmer decisions on what to produce and market and are developed to respect the current trade agreements. See the attached backgrounder for details regarding the actual agreements.

Contact: Tom Richardson – Director General
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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
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Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
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Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(403) 422-1823

When leasing land, get it in writing

Leasing land has been a common method for expanding or diversifying the farm operation. While verbal leases are widespread in agriculture, they are a poor substitute for a written agreement. When leasing cropland, it's not unusual to concentrate on two things – cash rent or crop share. Even after reaching an agreement, many fail to record it in the form of a written lease.

"A written lease agreement has many benefits," says Paul Gervais of the Farm Business Management Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It protects both the landlord and the tenant by recording the terms and conditions agreed to. In addition, the process of actually sitting down to write a lease is an excellent opportunity to settle any outstanding or potentially troublesome issues, and to clarify points in the agreement."

Other benefits of having a written lease agreement include:

- writing up a lease crystallizes the thinking of each party;
- the lease establishes the rights and responsibilities of both the landlord and tenant;
- it relieves both parties of having to rely on memory of the terms of the lease; and
- in the case of death of one of the parties, protects the heirs from unreasonable or false claims made by the other party.

"As well as documenting your rights to land, a written lease agreement also demonstrates to banks or other lenders that you are following good business practices," adds Gervais. "Another benefit is the ability to register the lease at the Land Titles Office. A written lease for a term longer than three years can be registered at the Land Titles Office and serves as notice of the tenant's lease to any potential purchaser of the land."

A written cropland lease agreement should at least include the names of the parties involved, the date of the agreement, its term, or length of time it will be in force, amount and terms of payment, and the location and description of the land. Other items could include:

- the rights of entry by the landlord or third parties;
- surface lease and easement income;
- restrictions on production practices;
- use of grain storage facilities or other buildings;
- responsibility for insurance and property taxes; and
- non-performance and termination clauses.

A written lease can also include terms for sharing possible government payments, such as the recent payment by the Western Grain Transition Payment Program (WGTPP), or payments from oil and gas exploration or extraction, for example.

The Farm Business Management Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has available *Leasing cropland in Alberta* (Agdex 812-5) which covers this topic in more detail. The publication also includes sample agreement clauses, methods of comparing cash rent and crop share arrangements, and income tax implications when leasing land. The publication is available at a cost of $5 plus GST from all Alberta Agriculture district offices. It can also be ordered from the Publishing Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 (please include $2 plus GST for shipping and handling) or by calling 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: Paul Gervais
(403)556-4240

Annual Food Tab receives rave reviews

Have you seen the *Enjoy Eating Alberta's Best* tabloid? In a recent evaluation, many Albertans said they certainly did. Not only was it noticed but read thoroughly and enjoyed. The Albertans asked overwhelmingly named the Food Tab as one of the best sources of information about Alberta food products. The tabloid was received by over 780,000 Albertans during Agriculture week, March 3 - 9, 1996.

A recent evaluation conducted by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, showed that consumers like the short, easy to read format of the tabloid.

Cont'd on page 4

"The format was one of the features that Albertans commented on very favorably," says Carmen Andrew, organizational development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The 1-800 'ask the expert' phone numbers which encourage interactive follow-up were also a hit with people. One of the main objectives of the tabloid was to complement interesting and informative articles with food safety, consumption storage tips that are beneficial to consumers."

Alberta Agriculture staff members on the Food Tab Committee worked closely with industry organizations to bring together the '96 *Enjoy Eating Alberta's Best* Food Tab, published by Alberta Agriculture's publishing branch. Along with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 10 agricultural societies, two exhibition associations, 14 county, 14 municipal district and one improvement district agricultural service boards the tabloid was supported and co-sponsored by 21 industry affiliations.

"This entire project is an excellent example of teamwork and cooperation between government and industry," says Andrew. "It just keeps getting better each year."

"We were very pleased with the positive comments on the format. It is the most cost effective method of getting this type of information to consumers," adds Laura Lee Billings, rural development specialist with Agriculture. "We did receive some helpful hints and suggestions to round out the overwhelming support and praise for the Food Tab. More information about the safety of Alberta food products, some recipes and tips for preparing Alberta food products, and a clip and save section with all of the Consumer Information numbers listed, were a few of the recommendations received."

The Committee is already working on next year's Food Tab. For further information on the Food Tab, contact Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's foods and nutrition specialists Suzanne Tenold at (403) 948-8504 in Airdrie, or Linda St. Onge at (403)427-2412 in Edmonton.

Contact:		
	Suzanne Tenold *(403)948-8504*	*Linda St. Onge* *(403)427-2412*
	Carmen Andrew *(403)742-7500, Stettler*	*Laura Lee Billings* *(403)854-5500, Hanna*

Fire blight expert visits Alberta

Alberta was honoured this past week by a visit from Dr. Thomas van der Zwet, one of the few world authorities on fire blight. Fire blight is a very destructive bacterial disease of the rose family common to Alberta.

Fire blight, familiar as a disease of apples, pears and rose family ornamentals, was originally confined to Canada and the United States. Subsequent to the 1950's, the disease turned up in the United Kingdom and in recent years has spread to more than 35 countries world wide. Major crop losses of pears, apples and loquats now occur in the Middle East, in drier climates, somewhat typical of western Canada and the U.S.

"Dr. van der Zwet was intrigued with Alberta's title 'Wild Rose Country' and wanted to see for himself first hand the occurrence of the disease on rose family plants in central Alberta," says Dr. Ieuan Evans, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The common occurrence of fire blight in Alberta was brought to Dr. van der Zwet's attention at an invitational seminar at the *World Workshop on Fire blight* at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario in August, 1995."

At the seminar, Dr. Evans gave a presentation on the destructive nature of this disease on mountain ash, apples and raspberries in the Edmonton area prompting Dr. van der Zwet to visit Edmonton. Dr. van der Zwet commented that the trip was well worth the effort academically and he was very pleased with his visit to Alberta. While visiting, he presented a practical growers seminar on fire blight at the Devonian Botanic Garden on July 26 and an academic seminar on the disease at the University of Alberta on June 27. Copies of his publication *Fire Blight – Its Nature, Prevention and Control* were distributed at both meetings.

"In a tour of the Edmonton area, back yard gardens and nurseries, fire blight was all too evident despite our cold, slow spring and record cold winter," adds Evans. "The bacterial disease seems indestructible and unaffected by cold temperatures. At one nursery the owner demonstrated that in 1995 at least $10,000 to $20,000 was lost to this disease. Hundreds of one, two and three year old apple trees succumbed to fire blight and pick-your-own raspberry plantings at the same location lost most of their berries to the bacterial infection."

Dr. van der Zwet outlined a comprehensive control program to the nursery grower and emphasised that prevention was much more effective than control.

The name 'fire blight' was apparently chosen because affected branches have blackened leaves and the tree or shrub appears as though scorched by fire. Some control measures outlined for nursery management are to be constantly vigilant in examining tees for blight symptoms, beginning four to six weeks after budding and continue checking bi-weekly until leaf fall. If blight is detected, use extreme caution and carefully remove blighted trees and burn or bury all infected material immediately. The removal of all blossoms associated with buds in the fall or those developing on young trees in late summer is also recommended.

For control in orchard situations, it is advisable to follow a fire blight prediction system. Do this by using a hygrothermograph, or a minimum-maximum thermometer, and consulting weather forecasts frequently, especially before and during bloom, to learn whether environmental conditions are conducive to infection. A control measure Dr. van der Zwet

Cont'd on page 5

recommends is to apply bactericides within 24 hours after a severe windstorm or rainstorm with or without hail.

There is no complete cure for fire blight, but applying all available integrated orchard and nursery management practices will keep fire blight damage to a minimum.

Contact: Dr. Ieuan Evans
(403)427-7098

Non-performance or herbicide resistance

One of the most controllable pests that affect crop yield is weeds. Just like all management decisions, weed control must be carefully planned.

"The decision to use certain herbicides must be based on the ability to control the target weeds and on how often they have been used in that field before," says Richard Guitard, cereals and oilseeds specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Weed resistance to various herbicides is a growing problem. Herbicide resistant wild oats have been positively identified in some areas. Problems have occurred with repeated use of the same wild oat and green foxtail herbicides in the same field and the use of soil residual type herbicides."

The key to effective weed control is rotating herbicides in concert with rotating crops and tillage. It is important to make sure you rotate to a different herbicide family, herbicides that kill the target weeds through a different mechanism of action. Check the Blue Book (Crop Protection with Chemicals 1996) or consult your local crop specialist for assistance in determining a proper herbicide rotation.

"Herbicide resistant weeds develop when the same herbicide is used repeatedly in the same field," adds Guitard. "The weeds come under what is called selection pressure. This selection pressure removes the weeds from the field that are susceptible to the herbicide leaving the resistant weeds to multiply and become the dominant population. Selection pressure can create a resistant population in as little as four years."

Herbicide rotation to the farmer may mean using a product that is not quite as effective or is more expensive than the herbicide used now, but it is much cheaper than a herbicide resistant weed population that can't be controlled.

"Identifying resistance can be difficult so it is critical that spraying problems are investigated immediately," says Guitard. "It is important to rule out all other sources that may affect herbicide performance, such as improper application, spray misses, unfavourable weather conditions, application at an incorrect leaf stage or weed flushes after application."

If the problem can not be resolved, consider the following questions:

- are other weeds listed on the product label being controlled;
- is the herbicide failure very patchy over the field;
- was there a failure of the same herbicide or herbicide group last year;
- do the weeds show herbicide injury symptoms but are still growing; and
- does the field history show the repeated use of the same herbicide or herbicide group?

If one or more of these symptoms are evident, there may be a herbicide resistance problem. Contact your local Alberta Agriculture District Office or the appropriate chemical company for a follow-up diagnosis.

If you find that a weed has become resistant in your field, you must find alternative control methods. Make sure that resistant weeds are not spread by harvesting equipment, untarped trucks, tillage equipment, contaminated seed or straw. It is important to rely on tillage, cultural control and herbicides from unrelated groups to provide a sound weed management system.

Contact: Richard Guitard
(403)826-3388

Safe sprayer clean out

It is important to clean sprayers thoroughly when changing chemicals. There are a few safety and common sense tips to keep in mind when your preform this necessary procedure.

"Always select a suitable site for flushing and cleaning a sprayer," says Gary Berger, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "You need a site where there is no threat of contaminating a water course or body of water with the wash water. Make sure the discharged wash water will not be accessible to children or animals."

Cleaning the sprayer thoroughly means paying attention to all of the parts, sprayer tank, pump, booms, hoses, strainers and nozzles. Plugged nozzle tips should be cleaned with a soft bristle brush or compressed air. Never use your mouth to blow the tip clean.

The basic steps for cleaning the sprayer when changing chemicals are:

- wash outside the sprayer, then drain the tank completely;
- remove and clean all strainers and nozzle tips and open boom ends;
- partially fill the sprayer tank with clean water, circulate and flush through the booms for a least 10 minutes, the drain. If any visible residues remain, repeat clean water rinse cycle;

Cont'd on page 6

- fill sprayer tank with clean water. Add one litre of household ammonia for every 100 litres water. Re-circulate the solution through the agitator and/or by pass for at least 15 minutes. Spray out and drain completely;
- repeat ammonia wash cycle; and then
- rinse twice with clean water and drain.

"If ammonia is not available you can add either 0.5 kg nutrasel or solvental, or 1 kg trisodium phosphate, or 0.6 litre agral 90 for every 100 litres of water," adds Berger. "Household ammonia is not effective on all pesticides. Some pesticides have specific recommendations for sprayer clean out. Read the product label to ensure the proper methods for clean out are followed."

Cleaning out the sprayer is an essential job, even though it is time consuming. Care and maintenance of spray equipment is one of the key reasons. Chemicals left in the sprayer can plug and corrode the equipment.

"Pesticides cost money. There can be chemical reactions between a new pesticide and the one previously used. To avoid loss of activity of the chemical, cleaning is essential," says Berger. "And finally, one of the most compelling reasons for flushing your sprayer is that leftover residues of previously used herbicides in the tank and boom can injure your crop."

Contact: Gary Berger
(403)675-2252

Agri-News Briefs

Open house at the Agriculture Centre

As part of the 90th anniversary celebrations for the Lethbridge Research Centre, an open house is being held on July 19 and 20, co-hosted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Visitors will be treated to some wholesome, quality food, provided by new and established food processors from the Lethbridge area. There is also a complementary picnic on Saturday at lunchtime. The type of research that puts food on the table, keeps Canada competitive in a global market, sustains resources and protects the environment will be demonstrated throughout the two-day event. The Lethbridge Research Centre was established in 1906 and is now Canada's largest regional centre. It is a place rich in history and accomplishments. While at the Centre, located just east of the City of Lethbridge, take a tour of the facility or a leisurely stroll through the beautiful grounds. Festivities begin on Friday at 1:00 p.m., complete with birthday cake, and continue from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Alfalfa responding well to sulfur

If your newer alfalfa stand has poor growth and low production, sulfur levels in the soil may be a factor to consider. Preliminary results of an alfalfa fertility project north of Athabasca show sulfur as a promising input. The project, initiated this spring, compares four fertilizer treatments, nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and sulfur. The fertilizer was applied May 3, just prior to rain. Early visual results show that the alfalfa responded very well to the sulfur. The resulting crop was darker green, faster growing, and looked healthy. The phosphorous had some response, whereas the nitrogen and potassium had no visual response. Yield data will be taken to determine the actual production and economics. The fertilizer was provided for this test by United Grain Growers, Athabasca. If you are interested in seeing this plot, plan on attending the Athabasca Grain Club Tour on August 8, 1996. For further information on the alfalfa fertility test, contact Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)675-2252.

4-H Horse Classic coming up soon

The 2nd annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic will be held on July 31 to August 2, 1996 at the Olds College in Olds, Alberta. During the event the 4-H members entered will compare knowledge, participate in horse clinics, compete for event prizes and enjoy each others company. As of July 1, 120 members, from 27 clubs, were registered for the Classic and 80 leaders have registered to attend. A headline clinic will be offered each day for members and leaders. Major sponsors for the event are Airdrie Trailer Sales Ltd., Lammle's Western Wear and United Farmers of Alberta. For further information, contact Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-4444.

Soil and water conservation

What do St. Albert, Lomond, Sexsmith, Edmonton, Clive, Mundare, Vermilion, Three Hills, Breton, Redwater and Stoney Plain have in common? They are all designated sites for the soil erodibility field testing being completed this summer. As well as the 'in field' testing, soil types are tested under controlled conditions in the laboratory to provide baseline data for assessing erodibility. This is all part of a three year study into water erosion of Alberta's soil types. Data and final results analysis are anticipated by winter 1997. Preliminary results from the field testing should be available winter 1996. For further information, contact Douwe Vanderwel, soil and water conservation engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)422-4385.

Weather not all bad

It's been cool and it's been rainy, but there are some crops that like it just the way it is. "Canola, peas and the cereal crops, are cool crops," says Ieuan Evans, plant disease specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "These crops are growing well right now despite the lack of full sun." We are currently experiencing 16 hours of sunlight per day. Diffused as that light might be, it still means good growing conditions for crops. For further information, contact Dr. Ieuan Evans at (403)427-7098.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 22, 1996

CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

Fed cattle prices on the rebound

It is very rare for fed cattle prices to increase in the month of June, but 1996 is shaping up as an unusual year in many respects. A counter-seasonal tightening of beef supply, expected to continue through the summer months, is providing some relief from the disastrously low prices experienced this April and May.

"Alberta fed cattle prices pushed into the mid-$70.00 range, as the U.S. market picked up significantly with holiday orders for beef," says Ron Gietz, livestock marketing analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The largest upwards price move in the last two months has come in the futures market. For example, October Live Cattle futures have advanced about seven cents per lb from their mid-April low point."

The futures market advances have been prompted primarily by the trend to reduce cattle placements onto feed, in response to the high cost of feed. Although Canadian placements of cattle onto feed may be down slightly from the year-ago period, the decline in feeding activity in Canada is not nearly as severe as in the U.S.

"The strength in the October futures contract, in particular, is in anticipation of a marketing "hole" in late summer," adds Gietz. "Since the cattle not placed on feed went to pasture, the question is when will the majority of these larger yearlings come off of pasture and back into the feedlot system, and when they will be added to beef production. If U.S. pastures dry up a little early, some of these cattle could be adding to beef production as early as November, at the same time as cull cow marketings are peaking. A late 1996 – early 1997 price slump is certainly a possibility, explaining why December and February 1997 futures contracts are trading several cents below the October contract."

Recent developments in the market suggest fed cattle prices have already put in their lows for this cattle cycle. Prices are likely to remain steady through the summer months, with slight price increases by late summer or early fall, as the impact of previous reductions in cattle placements are felt.

"Alberta – U.S. price spreads look like they will remain wide, but we seem to be getting used to that idea," says Gietz. "The Canadian dollar warrants close watching, as it is showing little inclination to drop further and a recent tendency to strengthen.

"The futures market is asking for cattle in late summer and early fall. This is an attempt to fill a perceived supply shortfall. Price strength at that time of the year is highly unusual and could be capitalized on. Consideration should be given to locking in a favourable price for September marketings through a forward contract or use of Live Cattle futures or options."

Contact: *Ron Gietz*
(403)427-5376

This Week

Fed cattle prices on the rebound 1
Alberta's fresh produce – get the facts 2
Report sets stage for strong hog markets 2
Weeds, how many are too many? 2
Expanded participation to fight purple loosestrife 3
Beat the heat – keep animals cool 3
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Alberta's fresh produce – get the facts

It's wonderful to have the plethora of fresh fruit and veggies available to consumers at this time of year. A trip to the local Farmer's Market is not just shopping, it's an adventure, an event. But what do you do with all the fresh produce once you get it home? That was a question Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's food and nutrition specialists were being asked repeatedly.

"Albertans love variety in the foods they prepare and eat," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist. "They also want to ensure that they are storing, preparing and serving food correctly. Many calls come in through the Food Safety Information Line as well as calls directly to the department from Albertans wanting information and advice."

Alberta's Fresh Produce factsheets help answer this need for information. Seven different factsheets are currently available and several more are in the works.

"The factsheets deal with topics such as nutritional benefit, selecting and picking, storage and handling, preserving, drying, cooking ideas, tips and recipes," adds St. Onge. "Ask for them at your favourite U-pick farm or Farmers' Market. Producers are finding the information a cost-effective way to add value to the products they grow and sell. Comments from consumers have been very positive. They really appreciate information that helps them get the most enjoyment and value out of their purchases."

To date factsheets have been prepared for cucumbers, corn, peas, raspberries, saskatoons, snap beans and strawberries. Factsheets on beets, carrots, cole crops (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower), pumpkin, rutabagas, squash and tomatoes are being worked on.

"Requests for more factsheets on more kinds of produce as well as on things like picking in the field, prompted no doubt by the number of U-pick farms in the province, have been very encouraging," says St. Onge.

Next time you are shopping at a U-pick farm or Farmers' Market, pick up a couple of the factsheets. Alberta's Fresh Produce is there for you to enjoy.

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-2412

Report sets stage for strong hog markets

The June 1 Hogs and Pigs Report shows all categories of the U.S. swine herd below year-ago levels, and in almost all cases below pre-report expectations. It shows a drop in breeding stock inventories to 95 per cent of the year-ago level.

"Clearly the high corn prices of the past year have had an impact on the size of the American swine herd," says Ron Gietz, livestock marketing analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This report sets the stage for strong markets through the remainder of 1996 and likely well into 1997."

Despite the positive report, it is likely that cyclical highs have been posted in both cash and futures hog markets, just after cyclical lows were posted in the cattle markets.

"With the Alberta pork board's forward pricing contracts now in place, producers are able to easily lock in prices for hog production up to a year in advance," adds Gietz. "Fortunately, the new product has been introduced during a period of strong futures market prices, resulting in some excellent forward pricing opportunities available immediately.

"As a general strategy, I recommend forward pricing a portion (up to one half) of expected 1996 and first half 1997 production at current favourable prices. Producers may want to concentrate on periods where the industry has previously experienced price difficulties, such as the December - January period."

Some of the low prices in previous December -January periods can be attributed to a widening of the Canada - U.S. price spreads (basis risk). With the Alberta contracts, the APPDC is assuming all basis risk, a benefit to the individual producer.

"When hog prices eventually turn lower, which they will, the current attractive prices will evaporate quickly," says Gietz. "There will be many occasions in the future when forward contract prices will appear unattractive or will only lock in a loss. Make the most of the current optimism in the marketplace."

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

Weeds, how many are too many?

The old adage, 'a stitch in time saves nine,' can certainly apply to controlling weeds in your field. Early detection and control can mean the difference between spraying an entire field or spot spraying. When deciding how many weeds are too many to tolerate, several factors need to be considered.

"Conditions to consider in making your decision to use herbicides are the crop stage versus the weed stage, weed seeds for next year, dockage and crop quality, harvesting ease, potential spray damage, and what crop do you plan to grow in the next growing season," says Gordon Frank, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's crop specialist in Brooks. "The bottom line in making the decision to spray is usually the yield loss that is likely to occur if the weeds are not controlled."

Cont'd on page 3

Even with average weeds, like wild buckwheat that is not super competitive, losses can be serious. Four weeds per square foot can reduce canola yield five per cent, barley seven per cent, wheat 10 per cent, and flax 20 per cent. Taller growing weeds, like lambsquarters, are even more competitive.

In a population study of wild oats, a more competitive weed, four wild oats per square foot reduced barley yield by 12 per cent, canola 18 per cent, wheat 21 per cent, and flax 31 per cent. Canada Thistle is three to four times more competitive than wild oats and with only one plant per square foot, canola yield can be reduced by 15 per cent.

"Yield loss like this makes us realize that weeds are a major factor in limiting crop growth and profitability," says Frank. "Herbicides may seem expensive but in most cases the cost is made up in crop returns. Good crop and herbicide rotation can reduce weed populations and keep expenses down considerably. Field scouting is a tool that can be used effectively for early detection and early control methods."

For a listing of each chemical and the weeds they control and information on the latest registered mixes and mix restrictions, application tips, expected results consult *Crop Protection with Chemicals 1996* (the blue book). It is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices for $10 plus GST. The guide can also be ordered from the department's Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Add $2 (plus GST) for postage and handling. Make cheques payable to the Provincial Treasurer. Or call 1-800-292-5697 for Visa and MasterCard orders.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

Expanded participation to fight purple loosestrife

Since 1990, when the first infestation of purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) was identified, hundreds of volunteers have joined Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in the fight against this harmful, noxious weed.

"The danger to wetlands posed by the presence of purple loosestrife in Alberta cannot be stressed enough," says Shaffeek Ali, provincial weed specialist. "Once this weed has even the smallest foothold in a water body, it can spread at an alarming rate and completely choke out all other vegetation. When this happens, wildlife, fish and native plant life die out or leave."

When purple loosestrife infests an area, nothing else can inhabit that area. There are no Canadian birds, animals or fish that depend on purple loosestrife as a food source. In a wetland, wildlife eat around the weed, consuming the native plant population and leaving the purple loosestrife free to do what it does best, produce seeds, some 2.5 million seeds per plant per year, and continue its infestation.

"At one time ornamental Lythrum cultivars were thought to be sterile and were planted in gardens," adds Ali. "However, recent research have shown that the ornamental variety can cross pollinate and produce viable seed."

Greenhouses and nurseries throughout Alberta have lent their assistance by voluntarily discontinuing the sale of Lythrum cultivars. A replacement program is in place in the province, and several nurseries are participating. Homeowners can dig up any existing purple loosestrife plants, be sure to get the entire plant including root system, bag them carefully in plastic bags and bring them in to nurseries and receive a free perennial in exchange. Before you take your Lythrum in, please check with the nursery to confirm whether they are a participant.

"The best time to look for this weed is in late July, when it begins flowering, and remove it before it produces viable seed," says Ali. "It can be easily identified by its long, spiked, bright pink/purple flowers. Five to six petals grow on each flower on the vertical spike. The plant can grow from one to three metres tall. Leaves are tongue shaped with smooth edges and attached directly to a four-sided stem."

Contact: Shaffeek Ali
(403)422-4909

Beat the heat – keep animals cool

High summer temperatures can stress farm animals. Cows may not produce as much milk, pigs will eat less and boar fertility drops when their environment is too warm.

"There are several solutions including shade, more ventilation to create a breeze, direct and indirect evaporative cooling, insulating the barn and storing cool night air by increasing night time ventilation," says Robert Borg, agricultural engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Red Deer office. "Normal bodily functions, like the ones mentioned, generate heat and on a hot day, who needs to add fuel to the fire."

Ventilation rates determine how much a barn will heat up. If a large volume of air is brought through the barn continuously, it's not there long enough for the animals to heat it up. By changing the air in a barn one room volume per minute, the summer heat rise will be less than 2.5° C above the outside temperature.

"Insulation has a big effect on how much a barn will heat up," says Borg. "A galvanized metal roof will absorb 90 to 95 per cent of the incoming solar energy. If the roof is not insulated, this heat radiates down into the barn. All you need to combat this is R5, one inch of rigid insulation."

Cont'd on page 4

Evaporative cooling comes in two types, direct and indirect. Direct cooling occurs when a sprinkler system or shower for pigs is installed. Pigs don't sweat and can only cool down by panting or finding a cool wet place to lay down. An hourly shower for these animals uses up that extra body heat evaporating the water on their skin.

Indirect cooling is used in greenhouses and some barns. Air is blown through wet fibre pads. As the water is evaporated by the heat in the air, the air becomes cooler.

Increasing airflow by creating a breeze on the animals can be accomplished with air stirring fans. Air movement will create a cooling effect called convective heat transfer.

"Space makes a difference," adds Borg. "Don't put as many animals in a pen during hot weather. Warm bodies in close contact are great for keeping warm in the winter but will overheat the animals quickly in the summer."

A new idea being used in U.S. chicken barns is storing cool air. Increasing the nighttime ventilation slightly to cool the birds, has a carry over effect into the hot part of the day.

"Shade is effective for maintaining summer milk production of dairy cows," says Borg. "A study in Argentina showed that the effect of artificial shades or shelters on milk production was the same as supplementing the diet with 3.5 kg of concentrate per cow per day. That can add up quickly to extra profits by saving costs and keeping production up."

Contact: Robert Borg
(403)340-5323

Agri-news Briefs

Karnal bunt

Karnal bunt, named for a town in India, is a fungal bunt disease that attacks wheat and triticale. It is primarily confined to Mexico and western Asia. The disease turns individual kernels of infected grain into a black, powdery soot that smells like rotting fish, so it is easy to identify. A one to two per cent bunt infection means rejection of wheat for food purposes. Karnal bunt is difficult to eradicate; its spores can lay dormant in fields for up to five years, and the fungus can be spread on the wind or carried to other fields by farm equipment. There are no fully effective chemical methods of controlling Karnal bunt. In March, the disease was diagnosed in durum wheat in Arizona. An immediate suspension of all foreign wheat shipments by the U.S. was put into effect. Later, in March and April, when infestations also appeared in Texas, New Mexico and California, Canada (and other countries) restricted or banned the purchase of U.S. wheat until the outbreak can be eradicated. For more information, contact Dr. Ieuan Evans at (403)427-7098.

Grasshopper forecast

An increase in the risk to crops and rangeland from grasshoppers is expected in 1996, but not as high as in the mid-1980's. Predictions are based on estimates of adult grasshopper density from the 1995 annual survey of about 2,600 sites. The damage potential of localized grasshopper outbreaks was lessened in districts that had above-average rainfall in 1995. The severity of grasshopper infestations this year depends primarily on weather. Grasshoppers tend to thrive in zones where moisture is available but low. High grasshopper numbers have been reported and some spraying done in the County of Newell. Field margins, fence lines, roadsides, dryland crops, fields adjoining dryland and crops grown on stubble must be watched closely. Infestations greater than about 10 per square metre should be monitored closely for crop damage. When using insecticides, take the proper precautions for user safety, correct use and proximity to threatened wildlife. For further information, contact Gordon Frank at (403)362-1212.

Wheat and durum price forecast

The CWB June 1996-97 Pool Return Outlook (PRO) reduced wheat and durum price forecasts by five and eight dollars per tonne, respectively. U.S. wheat harvest pressure and continued good prospects for world wheat output this crop year were factors behind the price adjustments. However, with late seeding here in western Canada, and prospects for a significant proportion of the wheat crop here grading feed, obvious problems in the U.S. winter wheat belt, as well as a number of isolated problem spots in other parts of the world, it looks like milling wheat prices will remain relatively strong again this season. For more information, contact Al Dooley, marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)427-5386.

Atlantic Provinces 4-H Young Foresters Camp

From July 24 to 27, a Young Foresters Camp will be held in Prince Edward Island. 4-H members from across Canada are chosen to attend this camp. The program will help 4-H members learn more about the forests of Canada and their importance to the country's economic, ecological and culture identity and health. Participants will learn more about the complex community of plant and animal life in the forest environment. Dalyce Russill of Elkwater was awarded this trip at the annual 4-H Provincial Selections Program. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement plus interpersonal skills. Russill also received the 1996 Premier's Award, the Alberta 4-H program's highest honour. From July 20 to July 24, Russill will also participate in a host family visit and will take in various tourist and cultural sites and events. The Alberta 4-H Member/Leader Bursary Fund sponsors and one 4-H delegate to attend this program. For further information, contact Marguerite Stark or Karen Bussey with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)948-8510.

Provincial 4-H judging competition

The 10th annual Provincial 4-H Judging Competition is being held at Olds College and the Mountainview Fair in Olds, Alberta August 9 - 11, 1996. Exclusive sponsor for the event is Alberta Treasury Branches. Awards will be given for individual achievement and finalists will have a choice of travel opportunities. The competition includes instructional and information clinics. During the competition participants judge 14 livestock classes including dairy cattle, beef cattle, light and heavy horses, swine and sheep conformation. Spectators are more than welcome. The event starts at 3:00 p.m. on Friday and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday. For further information, contact Henry Wiegman at (403)422-4444. For toll free long distance access, dial 310-0000 and then the number.

New information available on Agri-Fax

Two new *Agri-Fax* factsheets are now available. *Water Quality for Mixing Herbicides* (Agdex 114/20-2) deals with the importance of using clean, clear water for mixing herbicide solutions. Some minerals found in water can have an adverse effect on the performance of some herbicides. This factsheet summarizes the significant water quality parameters and the herbicides that can be affected. *Malting Barley* (Agdex 114/20-2) contains information on the characteristics of a good malting barley, how to choose a variety, selecting seed and a field, as well as instructions for seeding, fertilizing, monitoring and harvesting to ensure the best quality and highest yields are realized. Safe storage and how to prepare a representative sample are also areas of production covered in the factsheet. Copies of *Agri-Fax* factsheets can be obtained at your local agriculture district office or through the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Calling all outstanding gardeners

Do you have a pretty yard with outstanding perennial borders, herb gardens or cottage garden? If you do, the staff of the Devonian Botanic Garden (DBG) would like to visit your home this summer when your garden is in full bloom. "We want to take pictures of some of the truly beautiful gardens here in Alberta," says Gordon Nielson, an instructor at the DBG. "We would also be interested in distributing a varied assortment of perennials to home owners, free of charge, for plant trial, a nice way of saying hardiness assessments." Anyone interested in 'showing off' their garden or volunteering to be a part of the hardiness testing, can call either Gordon Nielson at (403)987-2064 or Michael Hickman at (403)987-3054. "Thanks for your interest, and we hope to see you when your flowers are in full bloom!" adds Nielson. From landscape gardening, herb gardening to adventures in water gardening, informative day courses are offered at the Devonian Botanic Gardens. For information on courses offered throughout the year, call (403)987-2064.

U of A Human Ecology program

From designing protective clothing on computer, developing a program on consumer fraud for seniors, to studying relationships in families, Human Ecology programs at the U of A equip graduates to succeed in some challenging area. Some of the career avenues chosen by textile, clothing and culture program grads include research, design and merchandising of protective clothing used in agriculture, industry, sports and outdoor activities. The U of A Human Ecology program, a four-year BSc program, is still accepting applications for the Fall 1996. Application deadline is August 1, or when the program is full. For an appointment to talk to one of the student advisors, call 1-800-804-6417 (492-5997 in Edmonton). For further information, contact Linda Capjack at (403)492-5997, e-mail address: lcapjack@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca

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AGRI-NEWS

July 29, 1996

Alberta launches court actions

The Government of Alberta is starting proceedings in the Federal Court of Canada for a declaration that the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) delivery contract program is invalid under the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

"In addition, Alberta has designed a program, called the Alberta Marketing Choice Program (AMCP), to facilitate the farmer sale of grain to known U.S. buyers to provide for marketing choice. A number of questions relating to the operation of the AMCP will be referred to the Alberta Court of Appeal," said Mr. Paszkowski. "The program will not be implemented until legal clarification has been obtained." If implemented, the program would operate at no cost to the taxpayer.

The Canadian Wheat Board Act does not specify that the Act applies to any government. On this basis, the Government of Alberta considers that it could export grain without a CWB license. The Government of Alberta will ask the Alberta Court of Appeal if this interpretation is correct, so that no one would risk being in contravention of the CWB Act for participating in the AMCP.

The AMCP is designed to protect the CWB as a marketing alternative. The program's purpose would simply be for the Government of Alberta to provide marketing choice for those farmers who want to sell grain directly.

The CWB delivery contract program is of concern. "The existing delivery contract program does not allow farmers to manage risk, uncertainty and their cash flow. The farmer is never sure he can market all his grain under this contract system, " said Mr. Paszkowski. "The arbitrary actions of the CWB regarding the partial cancellation of the barley "C" contract highlighted these concerns and demonstrated the effect the CWB can have on domestic market prices." In that case, the CWB refused to accept all barley offered by farmers, which had a negative impact on farmers' income.

"The one-sidedness of this contract program, in favour of the CWB, needs to be resolved, both in the interests of future relationships between the farmers and the CWB and to provide farmers with more choices in the management of their grain marketing."

Mr. Paszkowski feels the Western Grain Marketing Panel Report makes recommendations that do go some way toward implementing marketing choice, but the federal government has not yet given any indication as to whether it will accept or implement any of these recommendations.

"Some of the recommendations do not require statutory change. For example, the no-cost buy-back to farmers and the provision of export licenses could be implemented quickly," noted Mr. Paszkowski. "Instead, the federal government has

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Alberta launches court actions 1

Summer food safety beats bacteria 2

Cattle prices, lower than '95 but climbing 3

It was a cool June 3

Provincial 4-H beef heifer show 20th celebration 4

Monitoring crops a challenge this year 5

Positive outlook for lamb producers 5

Provincial dairy show celebrates 50 years 5

California 4-H exchange 6

Briefs 7

Coming events notice 8

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re-opened the divisive debate by asking for opinion on the Panel Report."

"Therefore, Alberta will continue to pursue actions that support two distinct outcomes-implementing marketing choice and reducing uncertainty," he said.

Copies of the Originating Notice of Motion in the Federal Court of Canada on the CWB Delivery Contract Program and the CWB Reference to the Alberta Court of Appeal on the Alberta Marketing Choice Program are available, on request, from Policy Secretariat, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, or by calling (403)422-2070.

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Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(403) 427-2137
C. D. Radke – Deputy Minister
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(403) 427-2145

Summer food safety beats bacteria

When a problem with food safety gets media attention, Albertans pay attention. Television, radio and newspapers recently carried information about cyclospora on imported berries. Being careful, we avoided those foods until more information was available.

"A few years ago it was "hamburger" or "barbecue syndrome" that struck children who had eaten at a fast-food outlet in the U.S. The same illness, caused by *E. coli*, killed an Alberta child last summer," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "There are many examples of illness caused in public establishments by careless handling of food. In Alberta, all cases of food-borne illness must be reported."

It's also important to be careful when handling food at home. In fact, most cases of food-borne illness happen after eating home-cooked food. Barbecue or hamburger syndrome, staph infections or salmonellosis can strike in the kitchen within two hours.

"Summertime can be risky because it's easy to become a little careless about the food we take to picnics, barbecues, community events, and so on," says St. Onge. "Warm summer weather is perfect for bacteria growth. Keeping food safe takes a few extra precautions, but it's worth the effort."

Food-borne illness is caused by bacteria. There is always some bacteria present in food. Bacteria such as salmonella, make you sick as they grow in your digestive tract. Staph or *E. coli* bacteria produce a toxin as they grow, and it's the toxin that causes illness. The toxin produced by one strain of *E. coli* breaks down the lining of the intestine and causes haemorrhaging. This is the one often called "barbecue disease" but it can grow in many foods.

"A toxin, produced by *C. botulinum*, is almost always fatal," adds St. Onge. "It can be present in meats and vegetables that are not canned under pressure. The toxin paralyses the nervous system, causing death by respiratory failure. Cooking kills the bacteria but the toxin remains in the food.

"It's critical to prepare food in ways that prevent the growth of whatever bacteria may be there," says St. Onge. "In twenty minutes at room temperature bacteria can double its original population. Within two hours, there could be enough to cause serious illness."

To prevent food-borne illness, aim for the fewest possible opportunities for bacteria to grow on food. Here's what to do:

- be sure to refrigerate susceptible foods before cooking. Keep hot after cooking, never lukewarm, especially foods like meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy products. Bacteria don't grow well in acidic foods (fruit, relishes, salad dressings) and they need moisture to grow, so crackers, breads, hard cheese, fresh vegetables, or cookies can be kept at room temperature if refrigerator space is short;
- keep hands and work equipment clean. It's important to wash your hands when handling food. Tie hair back and avoid touching hair, face, or clothing while working;
- counters and cutting boards should be clean. Once in a while, scrub surfaces with a bleach solution – a tablespoon of chlorine bleach in a gallon of water will kill bacteria;
- cross-contamination happens when bacteria is transferred from one surface to another. Flies, insects, dust in the air, dishes, utensils, cutting boards and dishtowels can all transfer bacteria. Keep food covered, and utensils and surfaces clean. Don't put cooked meat on a surface or plate that just had the raw meat on it. Use a separate cutting board for foods that will be eaten raw, such as vegetables. Use a dishwasher, or pour boiling water over the dishes or use a clean cloth to dry them.

"You can't see, taste, or smell the bacteria, that's why it pays to be careful," adds St. Onge. "Remember - keep it cold (4° C) or keep it hot (60° C). Keep your hands clean. Keep food covered. Keep work surfaces and utensils clean. Have a safe summer, and enjoy those picnics!"

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-2412

Cattle prices, lower than '95 but climbing

Feeder cattle prices may well have reached bottom for the current cattle cycle depending on how well the 1996 North American feedgrain crops progress. A slight build-up in feedgrain stocks by this fall could lead the way to acceptable, if not attractive, calf prices in the fall run and a long-term up-trend in feeder cattle prices.

"So far in the season, the prairie barley crop is progressing well on a large acreage," says Ron Gietz, livestock market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The possibility of some late-seeded wheat going into the feedgrain market also exists. The U.S. corn crop is a bigger question mark. A nine billion bushel U.S. corn crop was picked by analysts as the threshold level for building up supplies and a firm base for upward-trending feeder cattle prices in the future. A level of production that is far from certain."

Feeder markets continued to rebound in June, particularly on lighter cattle suitable for grass. Some of the lighter weight classes have gained almost 10 cents per pound from April lows. If this price strength persists until late summer, cattle purchased in late winter or early spring for grazing will provide good returns. The true test of recent market strength will come when volumes begin to increase in late August.

"Aside from the feedgrain market, livestock market watchers are studying slaughter statistics, specifically the volume of cow and heifer slaughter in the U.S. The evidence of U.S. cattlemen reducing their beef cow herds significantly, particularly in the dry U.S. Southwest, is encouraging. For the more northerly states, the jury is out until the fall culling season commences. A reduction in beef cow numbers by January 1997, which now seems likely, will set the stage for strengthening feeder cattle markets in the late 1990's.

"The potential long-term price improvement will do little or nothing for cow-calf producers struggling to meet cash flow requirements this fall," adds Gietz. "As far as the fall calf run goes, the most that can be said this early is that prices will be worse than last year but probably not as bad as a lot of the gloomy predictions that were made earlier this spring. For budgeting purposes, 75 cent October steer calves is probably a reasonable starting point."

Producers may want to look for ways to beat the fall rush for marketing heavy feeders and cull cows. It may be a good year to wean earlier in order to get your cull cows sold ahead of the anticipated large volume of marketings this fall.

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

It was a cool June

June began with above normal temperatures in the south and the Peace, and near normal temperatures in central Alberta. This pattern continued until the third week of June when very cool and wet weather dominated the province

"June was mostly cool with an average temperature 0.8 degrees below normal and total precipitation near normal," says Peter Dzikowski weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Most Alberta locations reported temperatures near normal to two degrees below normal."

Temperatures were three to seven degrees below normal for the week of June 17 to 23 and zero to three degrees below normal the last week of June. Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest monthly temperature departure, 2.6 degrees cooler than normal. The normal temperature for June in Rocky Mountain House is 13.1° C.

"Provincial growing degree days were 95 percent of normal which is about one to two days behind," adds Dzikowski. "April 1 to July 7 growing degree days are behind three to five days in the southern region, and eight to 10 days in all other regions.

"June is usually the wettest month of the year. June precipitation provided generally good moisture conditions for agriculture production, although some locations reported being too wet and others are getting pretty dry."

The near normal precipitation represents 0.7 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 74.1 mm. The wettest region in Alberta was the north west region for the second month in a row with amounts of 35 to 150 mm, or 50 to 180 per cent of normal reported.

The southern region reported the driest precipitation totals for June with amounts of 30 to 100 mm, or 40 to 140 per cent of normal.

Ballater reported the greatest precipitation total during June, 154.2 mm or 219 per cent of normal. Bow Island reported only 30.8 mm of precipitation in June, 44 percent of normal.

Averages used in the weather summary are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Provincial 4-H beef heifer show 20th celebration

Members from 77 clubs across the province helped celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show*.

"In total there were 270 4-H members and 285 head for the 1996 show, and 80 4-Hers in the freshman competitions were first time show participants," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Freshman classes are based 60 per cent on the members' showmanship skills, 40 per cent on conformation of their animal. While it may have been their first time at the provincial event, freshman competitors proved they knew their way around a show ring."

Top senior freshman honors went to Michael Tiltgen of the West Ponoka Beef Club and Meghan Kimmel of the Bassano 4-H Beef Club won the intermediate freshman title. Junior freshman champion Crystal Young of Lin-Berry Buck 4-H Club also teamed with clubmate Sarah Rosell to claim the junior grooming title and was part of the third placing junior team in the project bowl.

"The three-day competition opened with team grooming events. Senior winners were Amanda Thomas and Laura Bodell of the Fort Saskatchewan 4-H Beef Club," says Wiegman. "They also claimed the '96 intermediate team judging title and Bodell placed second in the intermediate showmanship category. Intermediate winners of the grooming competition went to Aspen Walsh and Mark Shologan of the Lethbridge-Coaldale 4-H Beef Club."

The introduction of the project bowl was well received by the members. The team of Matthew Gosling, Bow Valley Beef Club, Alison Fehlauer, Calmar Heart of the Country, Tawnya Copland, Nebraska Multi, and Kimberly Penosky, Botha Beef won the senior competition. Intermediate team honors went to Mark Shologan of Lethbridge-Coaldale 4-H Beef Club, Shaun Smathers of Fort Saskatchewan 4-H Beef, Jordan Champange of Irricana Multi and Courtney Ceretzke of Camrose Beef. Heidi Marcinkoski of Wavy Lake Beef, Dyllan Dixon of Spruce Grove Beef, Meghan Clark of Calmar Heart of the Country, and Avery Murphy of Bonnyville Beef made up the winning Junior team.

"Judging, freshman and showmanship competitions were held during the second day," adds Wiegman. "Top junior individual judge was Dan Vanderwell of Whiterose Beef Club, and with brother Adrian, placed second in the team category. Logan Wray won the intermediate title and place third for overall judge."

In the senior judging class, Derek Sutter and Kate Kroetsch of the Battle River district received top team honors and Sutter was the top senior individual judge, the top overall judge and placed third in overall reasons.

A special feature of the judging classes is the show ring competition where the team members act as judge and ringman in live show ring judging. Kroetsch and Sutter claimed the show ring judging title. Along with the reserve champion team of Richard Grant, Olds Multi club and Tracy Gardner, Eagle Beef, they'll represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Livestock Finals in August. Junior honors went to Dan Vanderwell of Whiterose Beef and Heather Marcinkoski of Wavy Lake Beef; Flagstaff district team of Bryce Sutter and Angela Chromik were second. These top two junior teams will also represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Livestock Finals.

Kelly Northey of Bashaw Beef was the top junior showman; intermediate showmanship winner was Sarah Northey of the Bashaw 4-H Club; and the top senior honors went to Carrie Cholack of Lamont Beef.

The final show day featured conformation classes. Two rings were in action given the 280 head of cattle entered in the classes. The supreme crossbred winner was Alison Fehlauer of Calmar Heart of the Country club. Fehlauer's three-year old Gelbvieh/Shorthorn cross cow with a March calf took the crossbred championship over Andrea Dundas' Simmental cross heifer.

A two-year-old cow claimed the top spot in the overall purebred championship. Colleen Claiter's Simmental was the supreme champion, with Sarah Cameron's Gelbvieh yearling as the reserve champion.

The Calmar Heart of the Country club claimed the herdmanship title. Second place went to Spruce Grove and third to Foothills.

This was the inaugural year for the Grand Aggregate Awards at the provincial show. Points were awarded to members for achievement and participation in all events. Crystal Young of Lin-Berry Buck was the top junior, Laura Bodell of Fort Saskatchewan was the top intermediate and the top senior was Alison Fehlauer of Calmar Heart of the Country. Based on aggregate points, the top three juniors (9-14 years of age) Laura Bodell, Crystal Young and Sarah Northey will join the top two seniors, Alison Fehlauer and Tracy Gardner, in representing Alberta at the "National Young Cattleman of the Year" program.

The annual provincial show is sponsored by Alberta Treasury Branches and UFA, hosted by the Bashaw Agricultural Society and administered by Alberta Agriculture.

Contact:	*Henry Wiegman* *(403)422-4444*	*Robyn Dow* *(403)422-4444*

Monitoring crops a challenge this year

Spring has been difficult for crop production in many areas of Alberta. Cool, wet weather meant a late start and continued moisture resulted in start and stop seeding and spraying. It all adds up to conditions that are just right for seedling and leaf diseases and nutrient deficiencies in crops.

"Weather conditions have also made it very difficult to do effective field scouting," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Problems that normally stand out may be masked by the amount of abnormal growth seen this year."

It may be more important than ever to take a disciplined approach to checking crops this year. The first task is to establish a pattern to check fields thoroughly and completely. Zig zag patterns are adequate in most cases. Extra time may need to be spent as producers will want to examine the field noting germination and emergence patterns as well as whole plants for colour, spotting, stunting or early death.

"Once a problem has been noted and the cause determined, you have to decide if it can be corrected now or not until the next crop year," adds Hockridge. "Scouting will tell you if the problem is localized or widespread, just starting, at low levels or severe. Knowing the problem will also assist in choosing the right action to control the problem. This is a time when producers have to decide if the cost of treatment is justified."

There is still plenty of growing season left. It is often amazing how crops can recover. Comprehensive field scouting can help in detecting minor problems that can be corrected before they result in unnecessary loss of yield.

Contact: Ron Hockridge
(403)361-1240

Positive outlook for lamb producers

Tight supply and steady demand for lamb in North America are contributing to the climbing lamb price this year. A record high lamb price was set in U.S. major markets in early June. Average slaughter lamb price in June was estimated at $98.00 U.S. per cwt in San Angelo, Texas, up sharply from $86.17 per cwt in May and $81.63 per cwt a year ago.

In central Alberta, railgrade lamb quoted at a record average price of $245.00 per cwt in recent weeks. Prices above the $200.00 mark were last seen in 1987 and 1988. In Edmonton, slaughter lambs averaged $116.00 per cwt, ranging from $111.00 to $123.00 per cwt at the mid-month sale.

"Alberta's out-of-province shipments of sheep and lamb have been increasing for several years," says Chuanliang Su, market economist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Many Alberta lambs have been shipped to Manitoba, then eventually to eastern Canada and the United States. Lamb and mutton production in the U.S. between January and May 1996, decreased seven per cent from a year ago. U.S. imports of lamb and mutton in the first quarter of 1996 were up nine per cent."

In the first quarter of 1996, Alberta live sheep and lamb exports to the U.S. increased to 6,534 head from 2,507 head a year ago. For the same period, Manitoba live sheep and lamb exports were 14,117 head, an increase of 44 per cent from 9,809 head last year. Total live sheep and lamb imports from the U.S. to western Canada decreased by 30 per cent to 2,673 head in the first quarter of 1996.

"With the tight supply, packers in North America will continue competing for lamb. Outlook for producers remains very positive," says Su. "Alberta slaughter lamb prices may stay at the $110.00 per cwt level for the coming months. Both slaughter and feeder lamb markets remain as good marketing options. The potential for lamb prices to move higher exists, but only to a limited extent."

Contact: Chuanliang Su
(403)422-2887

Provincial dairy show celebrates 50 years

Two-thirds of Alberta's 4-H dairy members representing all seven of the province's clubs took part at the 50th anniversary of the provincial 4-H dairy show.

"A total of 62 delegates participated in judging, clipping, project bowl, showmanship and conformation classes," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's provincial 4-H agriculture specialist.

Julene Copithorne's yearling was supreme show champion. Along the way Copithorne also claimed the reserve title in the intermediate calf class and champion in the summer yearling class. Copithorne and team mates, Caden Chalack and Derek Van Sickle were the overall judging team. The supreme reserve show champion also came from the yearling class, at the halter was Andrew Wildeboer of the Lacombe Dairy Club.

"A new event at this year's show was the team project bowl," adds Wiegman. "Teams answered knowledge testing questions on herd health, breeding, Alberta dairy history, and dairy production. Only two points separated the top two teams. Top honours for the project bowl went to Trevor Hofstra, Heidi Hofstra, Linda Rietveld, and Jason Rietveld of the Rollyview Dairy Club. Jason Rietveld was also the top senior and the overall individual in the judging competition. The reserve champions in the project bowl were the Mountain View Dairy team of Copithorne, Amanda Taylor, Linsey Chalack and Jillian Chalack."

Cont'd on page 6

Linsey Chalack was the top overall individual for class reasons in the judging competition and Taylor was second in the junior individual judging. Sandra Simanton of Lacombe Dairy was the top junior judge. Intermediate honours went to Markus Hehli of Usona Dairy.

Len Congdon of the Bashaw Club claimed both the senior and overall showmanship titles. For winning this title in 1993 and 1994, Congdon was also invited to participate in the alumni showmanship class and took top honours. The Alumni showmanship class included previous winners of the overall showmanship title. Reserve alumni showman was 1963 winner Jim Scott. Alexis De Witt was crowned top intermediate showman, and Taylor was reserve overall showman after finishing first in the junior category.

Intermediate clipping winner was T.J. Congdon of the Bashaw Dairy Club. Logan Chalack of Mountain View Dairy won the junior clipping.

Conformation class winners included Andrew Wildeboer of Lacombe for intermediate calf, Linsey Chalack of Mountain View for calf, and Jessica Simanton of Lacombe Dairy for junior yearling and winter yearling.

The club herdsmanship competition was won by the Lacombe Dairy Club. This year's runner-up was the Bashaw Dairy Club. Lacombe also claimed the club herd title with Mountain View in the reserve position.

The provincial 4-H dairy show is held in conjunction with the Red Deer Westerner during *Westerner Days*.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(403)422-4444

California 4-H exchange

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) is sponsoring two Alberta 4-H delegates to travel to California for a nine day exchange. Delegates, one male and one female, were selected at the Alberta 4-H Selections 1996, held at Olds College in April.

The 1996 delegates are Grant Sanden of Strathmore and Candace MacGougan of Coronation.

MacGougan is a 10 year 4-H member and has completed light horse and young horse 4-H projects. Besides being very active in 4-H, she enjoys animals, jogging and rodeo. Her future plans include attending the Animal Health Technology Program at Olds College.

Sanden has been an active 4-H member for eight years. In that time he has been involved in the small engines project. He plans to attend the University of Calgary to obtain a degree in science, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Sanden is very active in sports, especially rugby and baseball.

While in California, the delegates will attend the 4-H State Leadership Conference at the University of California in San Diego from August 3-6. The conference's goals are to involve youth in the process of addressing issues, enhance feelings of self-worth in youth and improve leadership skills.

On August 2, 1996, the CIBC will be hosting a send-off banquet for MacGougan and Sanden in Calgary. The delegates will fly to Sacramento later that day. After attending the conference, they will spend several days with their respective host families and return to Alberta on August 10, 1996.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403)948-8510
Candace MacGougan
(403)578-2388
Grant Sanden
(403)934-4243

Agri-News Briefs

Control of sclerotinia in canola

Control of sclerotinia in canola is becoming more financially attractive with the up-swing in canola prices. Acres seeded to canola this year is about 3.5 million. Sclerotinia, white stem rot, is one of the most destructive diseases of canola, particularly in higher yielding Argentine crops. To help predict outbreaks, a disease forecasting check list was developed. The forecast system is outlined in a recently revised Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development factsheet. It includes bloom stage identification information, checklist and methods of control. Copies of the sclerotinia agri-fax, Agdex 149/632-4, are available from Agriculture district offices or the Publishing Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. For further information, contact Dr. Ieuan Evans at (403)427-7098.

Cont'd on page 7

Great prices predicted for new oilseed crops

Three-year average yields numbers times the revised Statistics Canada estimated seeded area suggests a canola crop for 1996 of only 4.7 million tonnes. Such a small crop would be very positive for new crop prices. As well, the reduced area seeded in flaxseed suggests a 1996 crop of about 800,000 tonnes. Supplies will be tight enough in 1996-97 under these circumstances for very good prices in the upcoming season. Based on Statistics Canada estimates, there is no reason for further sales of new crop canola or flaxseed at this time. If area estimates are correct, the opportunity for pricing canola and flax at very attractive levels either later in the summer or in the late fall and winter period is good. It appears likely that we will see $10 per bushel again for 1996-97 crop canola. For further information, contact Al Dooley, marketing analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)427-5386.

Taking the good with the bad

Mention the weather and most Albertans shake their heads. Although sporadic rainfall has caused some problems, there was enough sunshine in June to get crops growing and making a recovery. On the down side, the weeds have also taken advantage of the moisture and the sunlight to do what they do best, grow and spread. Showers and wind have kept most spraying down to a minimum, which also gave weeds the upper hand. For further information, contact Shaffeek Ali with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)422-4909.

Hay, hay...what do you say

Pasture and hay field conditions, although they vary across the province, are a little slow on the 'get go' this year. As of the middle of July, only about 50 per cent of Alberta's first cut hay had been cut. Reports on the first cut show average yield. In many cases, yield was above normal in north and east-central Alberta. Some problems were reported in the south. Quality is beginning to decline as the rainfall continues. Some producers are remembering the drawn out hay season in '95. This season could be shaping up the same. On the up-side, the moisture that most of the province is experiencing makes for good growing conditions for forage into the summer. To get that first cut hay bailed, what is needed right now is sunshine and some drying breezes. For further information on hay, check with your district forage crop specialist or call Myron Bjorge at the forage crop unit in Lacombe (403)782-8030.

What's new at the nursery

The nursery crops group from the Crop Diversification Centres (CDC) is hosting an open house focusing on nursery crops research in Alberta on Thursday, August 15, 1996 starting at 10:00 a.m. at CDC-South. Tours of the Regional woody plant hardiness trials, Prairie regional woody plant trials, new container fertility and media projects, and the All American Selections bedding plant trials will be offered. This is an excellent opportunity to examine the plant collections in the Golden Prairie Arboretum, the Forever Green Pinetum, the Rose Garden and tour the fruit, vegetable and new crop research areas at CDC-South. A barbeque lunch will be offered at a nominal cost of $8 per person. RSVP would be appreciated. CDC-South is located on Highway #1, one mile east of Brooks. For further information and RSVP, contact Christine Murray at CDC-South, at (403)362-3391, fax (403)362-2554, or e-mail: murray@agric.gov.ab.ca.

Pioneer Acres annual threshman's reunion

On August 9-11, 1996, threshing demos, steam engines, working antique farm equipment and parades are the order of the day as Pioneer Acres holds the 27th annual threshman's reunion. Display buildings will be set up and baking displays will abound to make your mouth water and bring back memories of the old homestead. Everyone is welcome to come enjoy the event. Pioneer Acres is half of a mile north of Irricana, then half of a mile west of highway #9. Follow the signs posted on the road. Admission is $7 for persons 13 years of age and older. Parking is free. Camping for the weekend is $15, no hook-ups. For further information, contact Christene Fetterly at (403)935-4357.

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Coming agricultural events notice

Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in the summer or fall of 1996?

1. Please state the **name** of the event(s):

2. **When** is the event being held?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel or convention centre, if known:

4. Please give **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed:

5. This form has been **completed by** what organization? Please include your phone number:

Please return this form by August 23, 1996 to:

Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
Phone: (403)422-6958
Fax: (403)427-2871

"Coming agricultural events" is published quarterly in **Agri-News**. The next list will be **September 2, 1996**.

AGRI-NEWS

August 5, 1996

Tracking retail food prices

Last month, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's market analysis and statistics branch released the first province-wide survey of the *Nutritious Food Basket Price Report* (NFBPR). Since April 1995, a report was published monthly, based on Edmonton prices only.

Since the first NFBPR was released, dietitians and nutritionists have expressed interest in prices in specific areas. Maureen Whitlock of the market analysis and statistics branch developed a detailed listing of specific foods and other procedural information for the pricing survey. Dietitians and other volunteers spent several hours of their own time gathering data in their areas.

"This is the first time information like this has ever been available," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture. "It is a very large undertaking. Help from registered dietitians and nutritionists working with health authorities made the project feasible."

Tracking retail food prices over time provides valuable information to the agri-food industry. Price changes follow marketing cycles, and predicting those cycles is useful in business analysis and planning. Comparing retail price with the price of raw commodities makes it possible to calculate the value of the 'value added' component of processed foods.

"Retail food prices indicate what the market margins are," says St. Onge. "Our department has gathered Edmonton prices for many years, but we've never been able to gather them elsewhere. Now we have a snapshot picture of 26 Alberta locations for February 29, 1996 and data from a similar survey done on June 27 is coming in. We hope to do another survey in October. The more times data is collected, the more useful the information becomes."

Using the retail food prices to calculate the cost of a nutritious diet is another application for the data. Information about the cost of feeding a family has obvious value for Albertans, social policy planners and agencies who work with community groups.

Some of the other applications include:

- as foods in the 'basket' are selected based on consumption patterns using data collected by Statistics Canada, advertising and promotion strategies can be planned to encourage Albertans to buy Alberta brands of the foods they are already consuming;
- quantities of foods used to calculate the 'basket' provide adequate nutrition. We can compare domestic sales with quantities we know Albertans should be consuming. This information helps determine if the domestic market is saturated and whether the agri-food industry should concentrate on exports or continue promoting products in Alberta;

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Tracking retail food prices 1

STOPDED 2

Stork's-bill on the increase 3

Home grown produce by Alberta's market gardeners 3

Report on special commodities 3

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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- it will be possible to compare the cost of a nutritious diet using all Alberta foods with the cost of the same diet using non-Alberta foods;
- gathering retail food data in so many locations, not just the major cities, may show variations in cycles and trends; and
- consistent differences in retail price survey information among the various Alberta locations may provide useful information on competitive advantages, cost of transportation or localized market opportunities.

"The industry and Albertans benefit when customers have the knowledge needed to plan, buy, store and prepare nutritious Alberta food products," adds St. Onge.

Copies of the Nutritious Food Basket Price Report are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Market Analysis and Statistics Branch, 302, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Linda St. Onge *Maureen Whitlock*
(403)427-4367 *(403)422-3124*

STOPDED

Twenty-one Alberta members of the Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) visited Great Falls, Montana to observe the impact of Dutch Elm Disease (DED). The visit to the area on June 19 and 20, 1996 gave members a chance to gain firsthand knowledge of the disease by seeing an urban municipality, heavily planted with elm trees where DED has taken a foothold.

STOPDED is a nonprofit organization whose members include nursery operators, landscapers, commercial and municipal arborists, provincial and municipal parks staff, research scientists and other interested Albertans. The principal uniting all of these individuals is a desire to preserve and protect Alberta's elms from this destructive disease.

"We were treated with great hospitality by the people of Great Falls," says Janet Feddes-Calpas, DED technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Great Falls has been dealing with DED since 1987 when it was first identified. With no effective response in place, the city lost 9,200 of an estimated 14,000 elms between 1987 and 1995. Whole boulevards of 80 year-old elms had to be destroyed because of DED."

Robert Deming, Mayor of Great Falls, advised the group of the importance of preparation and stressed not to wait until the disease shows up in Alberta to start planning a response. The provinces of Alberta and British Columbia are the last regions of North America still untouched by DED.

During the visit, Jon Thompson, Great Falls City Forester and his crew, responsible for the DED management program, organized a two-day workshop. The STOPDED group inspected diseased trees, observed beetle galleries, reviewed city ordinances pertaining to DED and learned about the use of fungicide to protect healthy trees.

Since 1987, Great Falls has spent about $1.6 on tree removal and replanting, average $183,000 per year. It is estimated that if an effective DED management program had been in place before the disease hit, the city could have saved $160,447 per year since 1987.

"After seeing what Great Falls has lost, Alberta municipalities should genuinely be concerned about what DED could do to our elms," says Feddes-Calpas. "DED is virtually on our door steps. Edmonton and Calgary have already trapped European elm bark beetles. We know that DED can show up three to seven years after the beetles first appear. Great Falls is only 200 km south of the Coutts port-of-entry, and Regina, Saskatchewan is already fighting the disease. It would only take a very small load of diseased elm firewood from either area into Alberta and we would be fighting DED, too."

The first step in developing an integrated DED management program is to prepare an elm tree inventory. Accurate and reliable data is needed for sound planning decisions. If DED hits Alberta, this information will identify areas for intensive surveillance.

"The second step is to reduce beetle breeding sites by preventive pruning of dead branches from healthy elm trees and removal of dead elms and stumps," adds Feddes-Calpas. "Preventive pruning must be done between September 30 and April 1 when the elm bark beetles are not active. From April 1 to September 30, elm trees should be pruned only if absolutely necessary. Dead elm trees and stumps should be removed immediately and properly disposed of. Stored wood can be a breeding site for the beetles, so all pruned and dead wood should be burned or buried (to a depth of 30 cm). Municipal elm disposal locations, separate from other disposal spots, should be set up for elm wood so proper disposal can be done."

The third step is to create awareness to prevent the introduction of DED. Transporting or storing elm wood as firewood should be avoided. Albertans can help protect elms by being familiar with the symptoms of DED, monitoring their elms on a regular basis, and taking preventative measures by keeping elms well maintained and vigorous. If anyone suspects the presence of DED or signs of beetle activity, it is essential that they report it to municipal staff or call the provincial DED hotline, immediately. To reach the DED hotline, toll free, dial 310-0000 and ask for 362-3391.

Contact: Janet Feddes-Calpas
(403)362-3391

Stork's-bill on the increase

Stork's-bill is a very persistent weed and is on the increase. It can be annual, winter annual or biennial, spreads quickly by seed and is almost everywhere in the province.

The cotyledons (seed leaves) are deeply divided into three lobes, the end lobe larger than the two on the side. Stems and true leaves, that are finely divided, have bristly hairs. It is easily recognized by a 3-4 cm long purple flower, resembling a stork's bill.

"Stork's-bill usually gets a head start on crops and other broad leaf weeds," says Gordon Frank, crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It is very drought tolerant and can be present in cultivated and non-cultivated fields."

Heavy infestation of this weed can smother a crop, interfere with harvesting operations and reduce yields. Greatest yield reductions occur when stork's-bill emerges before or at the time of crop emergence.

Stork's-bill is considered a serious competitor, especially in sugar beets, potatoes, dry beans and peas. The weed can become a problem under continuous cropping, and stork's-bill seed can be difficult to separate from small seed crops.

"Control of stork's-bill is most effective at an early stage," says Frank. "Often, however, there is more than one type, or life-cycle, of stork's-bill present which makes control difficult. There are limited control options for most crops and no herbicides available for control in canola. Infestations are high, particularly with the increase in canola acres."

Cultural control includes fall and spring tillage to eliminate rosettes. Fall irrigation stimulates germination and most seedlings will then be killed by frost, except the winter annual form.

Contact: *Gordon Frank*
(403)362-1212

Home grown produce by Alberta's market gardeners

From its beginnings, when about 60 market gardeners decided to form an association in 1984, the Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA) has grown. The grower-membership list now boasts 207 producers of quality, farm-fresh fruit, vegetable and field-grown cut flowers.

"The value of fresh, locally grown, quality produce demanded by health conscious consumers has spurred expansion of the industry," says Lloyd Hausher, fruit specialist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre – South . "Many producers sell at the farm gate, either pick-your-own or pre-picked at their farm market. Many also attend the numerous farmers' markets in Alberta. Market gardeners can be found across the entire province."

Over 30 types of vegetables and five types of fruit are on the market at one time of the year or another. Many producers specialize in one or more crops and grow only certain vegetables and fruit.

"Although the year started off a bit late, presently locally grown strawberries, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, green onions, peas, radishes and rhubarb are coming into their prime," adds Hausher." Other crops such as saskatoons, raspberries, beans, beets, cabbage, carrots and summer squash will not be far behind."

Of the 207 AMGA members, more than 150 of them produce strawberries, and many of these grow the Junebearing type that are ready now. Later strawberries (day-neutrals) produce most of their crop in the fall, usually producing the heaviest in August and September.

The AMGA distributes an updated brochure of growers each year, listing the producers' farm, directions to the farm, phone number, the type of produce grown and sales method of each operation. This year 160 grower-members are listed in the *Come to Our Farm* brochure.

For more information on the market garden industry, availability of farm-fresh produce, or a copy of the guide, call the 1-800-661-AMGA (2642) number.

Contact: *Lloyd Hausher* *Judy Butt*
(403)362-3391 *1-800-661-AMGA*
(403)826-1709

Report on special commodities

On June 28, Statistics Canada released its June seedings report. The survey was taken between May 27 and June 6. Some uncertainty because of the cool, wet spring weather across the prairies may mean some changes to the crop seeding numbers

Some highlights of the crop area report for Alberta include:

Dry pea acreage is forecast to decrease 25 per cent this year to 350,000 acres, from 465,000 acres last year.

- Mustard seed acreage is expected to remain steady in 1996, at 115,000 acres.
- Sugar beets area is estimated to remain unchanged at 35,000 acres.
- Canary seed acreage is forecast to triple from 1995's level to 30,000 acres this year.
- Lentil area is estimated to decrease 38 per cent from the 1995 level, to 25,000 acres this year.
- Coloured beans are forecast to fall 33 per cent this year to 20,000 acres, from 30,000 acres last year.

"Generally, with the exception of weather related disturbances such as an early frost and the effect (if any) of last minute seeding changes, these figures will determine production estimates for the near term and the subsequent prices," says Don Hansen, market economist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The acreage estimates will likely be interpreted by the trade mostly as neutral. Earlier lentil and canary seed acreage intentions were seen by the trade to be overly optimistic; therefore, the report may be considered to be slightly bearish in these commodities (depending on yields). The current buoyant prices will not likely be pressured down much, leaving prospects favourable for producers, in particular those who hold top grade products come fall."

The June 28, USDA grain and oilseed acreage estimates for 1996, forecast sunflower acreage to decrease 20 per cent to 2.8 million acres while safflower area is forecast to fall nine per cent to 226,000 acres. Dry edible bean area is estimated to fall 12 per cent from 1995's level to 1.8 million acres. Sugar beets area is projected to fall four per cent to 1.4 million acres. Mustard seed is estimated to decrease from 23,000 acres in 1995 to 16,000 acres this year.

Contact: Don Hansen

(403)422-3099

Agri-News Briefs

Dried flowers – an Agriculture business

A new factsheet on the commercial dried flower industry, in the AG-Ventures series, has just been released by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. It provides industry highlights, regulatory basics and marketing information. If interested in the dried flower business, this easy to follow factsheet, Agdex #280/830-1, is a great place to start. It deals with production, from growing to drying to bundling, the economics and the financing of this type of business. Copies may be obtained from district offices or Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

From French's to Grey Poupon, Alberta crops cut mustard

Yellow, brown and oriental types of mustard seed are grown in Alberta. Yellow is the main type used in prepared mustard. Other types are used as ingredients in salad dressings, ketchup, meat extender and as a water binder in sausage. Mustard seed production in Alberta doubled from 45,000 acres in 1992 to 90,000 in 1995. Most is exported to the U.S. and western Europe where it is processed into prepared mustard and mustard flour. Canada has had 99 per cent market share of the mustard imported into the U.S., about 70,000 tons per year, $500 million annually. Regular yellow mustard, 80 per cent of that market, is very price competitive and has a low profit margin. Higher priced specialty, gourmet mustard sales in Canada are worth $6 million and growing at 13 per cent each year. Canadians, influenced by European heritage, tend to eat more specialty mustards, while consumers in the U.S. eat more regular, yellow mustard. For further information, contact Neil Miller, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)782-3301, Lacombe.

A dilly of a tour...have you herb

On August 13, 1996, Camrose is the place to be. Whether you take part in the morning tour, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., or the afternoon tour, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., the Camrose Herb and Spice Tour is well worth taking. Exotic crops from around the world, 28 in total, have been grown. You will get the chance to not only see how these special crops grow in Alberta, but experience some of the unique flavours. From buckwheat and sunwheat to lentils, beans and peas, borage, basil, fenugreek, dill, proso millet and many more, all will be discussed, their hardiness, uses and benefits described. A great afternoon for greenhouse producers, the backyard gardener or anyone with a love for the variety of flavours spices and herbs can provide. Located just four miles north of the junction of Highway 21 and Highway 13, the tour site is easy to find. For further information, contact Margo Lawrence, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)679-1210, Camrose.

Cont'd on page 5

Spittlebug – a new pest in Alberta

Seen any white foamy masses that look like spit on primarily alfalfa but also on other plants in your area? It is likely the protective covering for newly hatched nymphs of the spittlebug. Spittlebugs, or froghoppers, are widely distributed across Canada. They are pests for strawberry, nursery and legume forage crops. Both nymphs and adults feed by sucking the sap of host plants. Reports of heavy infestations in other parts of North America indicate this insect can cause substantially reduced crop yield. Wilting, stunting of growth, loss of vigour and shortening of internodes are other effects. This pest has been a problem in the U.S., but is new to Alberta and we have very little background on it. This is likely just a one year problem, but monitoring of the levels and problems encountered with spittlebugs will continue and updates will be made as available. Normal cutting of alfalfa ends the problem because the nymphs die before completing their life cycle. Last year and this year, haying was late and has allowed the insects to complete their cycle. Spittlebugs shouldn't be a problem on second cut alfalfa but farmers may see them again next year. Once we get to normal haying the problem will likely disappear as quickly as it came. For further information, contact Mike Dolinski, provincial entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)422-4873, Edmonton.

Ellerslie soils farm tour

What limits crop production in Alberta? Too little research? Crop varieties? Not enough high tech equipment? Actually, what limits production most, are the small mistakes that add up in every field. Those small mistakes can be in management, pest control, incorrect or inadequate fertilizer. The diagnostic field school, held at the Ellerslie soils farm, helps identify the factors that limit production, which means errors can be corrected as quickly as possible. Plots at the soils farm demonstrate the effect of weed competition, of herbicide residue on subsequent crops, and of seed size on germination and seedling vigour. New varieties are also show cased at the farm. The tour is an opportunity to see what is done at the Ellerslie soils farm and what new and innovative ideas and methods are being used. The tour is scheduled for Friday, August 9, 1996 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. The Ellerslie soils farm, also called the U of A soils farm, is located just south of Ellerslie Road on 127 Street, Edmonton. For further information, contact Joan Seath at (403)427-7098, Edmonton.

Direct seeding tour in Red Deer

Farmers and industry are invited to the August 13 tour of the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative's (ARTI) direct seeding site at Red Deer. The tour runs from 1:15 to 5:15 p.m. followed by supper. Both the tour and the supper are free. "Openers, fertilizer placement, surface applied granular herbicides, direct seeded forages, seed depth, seeding rates, row spacing, pre-seed burnoff and Roundup Ready Canola are some of the featured plots on the 110 acre site," says Peter Gamache, ARTI program manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We are fortunate to have the cooperation of our partners in setting up this long term direct seeding site." The large scale plots by Monsanto, DowElanco, Viridian, Westco and the Conservation and Development Branch will be featured on the tour. Key to the site is a 40 acre plot comparing direct and conventional seeding. A wealth of information on direct seeding is available at the site. The site is located about one kilometre west of Highway #2 and the 32 Street (C&E Trail) exit from Red Deer. If you can't make it on August 13, the site is open for self-guided tours everyday.

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AGRI-NEWS

August 12, 1996

CANADIANA

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Agri-food export to the U.S. on the rise in '96

Exports to the U.S. are crucial for the continued growth of Alberta's agri-food sector. The U.S. market is by far the most important external market for commodities grown and processed in this province.

"In the first quarter of 1996, the value of Alberta's agri-food exports to the U.S. rose 22.7 per cent over corresponding 1995 levels to $555.3 million," says Michael Adam, trade statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "If this level of performance is sustained through the balance of the year, total 1996 exports will reach $2.2 billion, easily surpassing last year's record and establishing another all-time high."

Between 1990 and 1994, the annual farm-gate value of Alberta farm production averaged $5.19 billion. The value of commodities exported to the U.S. during this period (adjusted for freight) was $614.1 million, about 12 per cent of total farm production.

"In 1995, the U.S. accounted for a record high $2.0 billion worth of agricultural and food products exports from Alberta, a growth of 6.2 per cent over year earlier levels," says Adam. "Significantly, between 1991 and 1995, exports to the U.S. made up 45 per cent of Alberta's total agri-food exports to all countries. This proportion has tended to increase over the years, reaching a high of 52 per cent in 1994. The proportion in 1995 was 48 per cent."

In recent years, exports of live cattle have contributed significantly to the overall value of shipments to the U.S. In 1995, cattle exports rose 15 per cent in value, to $690.4 million – about 36 per cent of the total value of agri-food products exported to that country. Also, a significant recovery resulted in a 172 per cent increase in the value of live hog exports which rose to $51.3 million, from $18.9 million in 1994.

"To date, wheat and barley shipments are sharply down from 1995 levels," adds Barbara Pekalski, research assistant with market analysis and statistics branch. "Through March, export quantities were down 39 and 45 per cent for wheat and barley, respectively."

Wheat sales decreased in 1995 after rising three straight years. The value of exports was down nine per cent in 1995 to $84.8 million while export quantity fell to 395,015 tonnes, from 574,255 tonnes in 1994.

Barley sales also plummeted in 1995, with value dropping 26 per cent to $82.9 million, and quantity falling 40 per cent to 491,715 tonnes, from 817,819 tonnes a year earlier. In contrast, oat exports rose in 1995 as shipments climbed almost 28 per cent to 516,218 tonnes and export revenue increased 55 per cent to $76.1 million.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Agri-food export to the U.S. on the rise in '96 1

Participation doubles in second provincial 4-H classic event 2

Condiments for cows 2

Testing for moisture in forage crops 3

Shade loving favourites 3

Research centre evaluates NH_3 Controllers 4

Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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"Substantial increases occurred in exports of several high value, processed agri-food products during the year," says Adam. "In fact, exports of these products have grown phenomenally in the last five years, rising 152 per cent, from $319.7 million in 1991 to $805.1 million in 1995."

Leading the 1995 growth, revenue from pork exports rose 35 per cent, rising to $91.4 million from $67.9 million a year earlier while the quantity exported rose 31 per cent to 32,945 tonnes, from 25,168 tonnes in 1994.

Although beef shipments remained relatively steady in 1995 (at 122,575 tonnes compared with 122,317 tonnes in 1994), revenue fell four per cent to $339.6 million because of lower prices in 1995. Further, revenue from canola oil exports (crude and refined) declined 10.1 per cent to $107.1 million as shipments fell 15.2 per cent to 118,657 tonnes.

The ultimate total revenue from export in 1996 will depend on such major factors as the exchange rate of the dollar, the strength of the cattle market, and the extent to which grains are successfully marketed across the border.

Contact:	*Michael Adam*	*Barbara Pekalski*
	(403)422-2903	*(403)422-3086*

Participation doubles in second provincial 4-H classic event

With 122 members from 27 Alberta 4-H light horse clubs plus 65 volunteer leaders on hand, the 1996 *Provincial Horse Classic* was a resounding success. In its second year participant and club numbers doubled. Ninety-five per cent of the inaugural 4-H Horse Classic members were repeat participants.

"The participation focus of the program plus the support from our three major sponsors Lammle's Western Wear, United Farmers of Alberta and Airdrie Trailer Sales Ltd gives attending 4-H horse project members an opportunity to succeed. The program focus encourages participation through 4-H members comparing horse knowledge, enhancing skills and socializing with other 4-H horse project members," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H agriculture specialist.

Contests were for both individuals and teams. Everyone registered was automatically entered in the hippology contest, a test of members' equine knowledge through five phases – knowledge stations, live horse judging, identification stations, a quiz and team problems.

The top four senior members, based on individual hippology points, qualified for the *Denver Western 4-H Horse Classic Award Trip*, January 8 to 13, 1997, sponsored by Lammle's Western Wear. They are Vicki Crowson of the Circle V Multi Club (Vauxhall area), Alesha Campbell of the Big Valley Outriders 4-H Club, Staci Saruga of the Killam 4-H Light Horse Club and Angie Sheppard of the Lethbridge 4-H Light Horse Club.

Campbell was the top senior in the hippology contest. Top intermediate was Shelli Paulsen of the Rainbow Riders, and top junior, Tamara Quaschnick of the Berry Creek Light Horse Club. The top hippology team was Lacy Figenshau of Warner Multi, Shelli Paulsen of the Rainbow Riders(Stettler area) club, Stephanie Harink of the Blindman Valley Light(Blackfalds area) Horse Club and Cory Turner of Meadowview Multi(Barrhead area).

Taking first place in the team demonstration contests were the junior pair of Crystal Howery and Christina Toews of the Hanna Prairie Riders, the intermediate team of Becky Christianson and Emily Simkin of the Coronation Range Riders, and the senior team of Sultana Steinbach of Bassano and Kirk Prescott of Chase B.C.

Top junior in the demonstration contest was Stephanie Harink of the Blindman Valley Light Horse Club, top intermediate was Darcy Erion of the Coronation Range Riders, and top senior was Staci Saruga of the Killam Light Horse club.

In the "A" event horse bowl team final Cheryl Theson of Blindman Valley Light Horse, Pamela Courtney of Coronation Range Riders, Hanna Dunford of Whiterose Multi (Carvel area) and Kim MacPherson of the Strathcona Rein Riders took first place honours and the Blindman Valley Light Horse team took the "B" event. Team members were Virgina Ogilive, Stephanie Harink, Jeramie Harink and Joanna Dickmann.

Marketing class winners were junior, Tamara Quaschnick of Berry Creek; intermediate, Shelli Paulsen of Rainbow Riders; and, senior, Sarah Leanard of Norfolk, England a Young Farmers Confederation exchange student with the Blindman Valley Light Horse Club.

The *1996 Provincial Horse Classic* was at Olds College, July 31 to August 2, 1996. For more information, contact Wiegman in Edmonton at (403)422-4444. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact:	*Henry Wiegman*	*Dwayne Grover*
	(403)422-4444	*(403)782-5528*

Condiments for cows

Not ketchup or relish - but copper, manganese, zinc and selenium are the little extras demanded by grazing livestock.

"Pasture forages are good sources of calcium, phosphorus and some trace minerals," says Josie Van Lent, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "However, given the expected productivity of today's livestock, in most areas of the province it is difficult to meet all of the requirements for macro and trace minerals without some supplement to grazing."

Cont'd on page 3

Phosphorus content of grasses and legumes is relatively high in the spring and declines as the plants mature and may be below requirements by mid-July. Keeping in mind that a cow's requirement for phosphorus is highest during the breeding cycle, a phosphorus deficient diet can occur mid way through the breeding season. Research has demonstrated that supplying phosphorus on pasture to breeding cows will increase fall pregnancy rates by 10 to 15 per cent when phosphorus levels are inadequate.

"Whether or not you need to feed a trace mineral (tm) salt with your range mineral will depend on the level of trace minerals supplied in your 1:1 range supplement," adds Van Lent. "The level of trace minerals in range supplements is usually insufficient to meet cattle needs. Cattle must have salt, so it's advisable to use a tm salt. Don't give cattle a choice between tm salt and blue (cobalt iodized) salt. Cattle don't like the taste of tm and they will choose the blue salt over the tm salt everytime."

Nutrient analysis of legume and grass pastures completed by Alberta Agriculture's Soil and Feed Testing Lab show that Alberta pastures may be up to 93 per cent inadequate in copper, 69 per cent inadequate in manganese, 94 per cent inadequate in zinc and 66 per cent inadequate in selenium. A trace mineral supplement program should supply 80 to 100 per cent of the animals' total requirements.

"Some animals will not eat range mineral, especially those supplements containing high levels of phosphorus," says Van Lent. "Mixing in a trace mineral salt encourages consumption of the range mineral."

Most minerals are formulated using the law of averages - average consumption will meet average requirements when feeds are average in quality. As a rule of thumb, in-take should be 30 to 40 grams per head per day.

Contact: Josie Van Lent
(403)853-8104

Testing for moisture in forage crops

Several factors determine whether or not maximum digestible nutrients in forage crops will be obtained. The crop must be harvested at the proper growth stage and it must be preserved by storing the crop as silage or hay. Forage should be tested to ensure the crop is within the specific range of moisture content appropriate for the storage method planned.

"The storability of baled forages is also affected by the hay temperature during baling," says Marshall Eliason, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "High temperatures and a higher moisture content can result in spoilage." High or low moisture content in forage being put up as silage could result in improper fermentation. If stored at over 70 per cent moisture content, leaching of nutrients is likely to occur.

Optimum moisture content for specific storage methods are:

- 60 to 70 per cent for bunker and horizontal silo;
- 50 to 65 per cent for an unsealed upright silo;
- 40 to 50 per cent for a sealed upright silo;
- 15 to 20 per cent for baled hay depending on hay type and bale size; and
- 15 to 25 per cent for loose hay stacks.

Besides the usual visual and 'hand squeeze' methods used by experienced operators, moisture content can be measured accurately and quickly by a scale and microwave. Commercial moisture testers are available and measure to varying degrees of accuracy.

To do microwave testing of feeds, weigh out approximately a 100 g sample of the chopped forage (not including the weight of the container). Spread the forage sample on a paper plate or in a paper bag and put it in the microwave oven. You may want to place a glass of water, about three-quarters full, in the oven also to prevent the sample from burning. Heat at 80 to 90 per cent power for four minutes. Remove sample, mix and weigh. Continue to reheat using a lower heat setting at 2 minute intervals, re-weighing each time. When the weight of the sample does not change after two or three drying intervals, it is 100 per cent dry.

To calculate the moisture content, calculate the difference from the original weight to the dry weight. For example findings for a sample that was 64 per cent moisture would have been: 100 g (original weight) minus 36 g (dry weight) equals the original sample moisture content.

For a copy of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute's reports on commercial testers, contact your local Agriculture district office.

Contact: Marshall Eliason
(403)427-4009

Shade loving favourites

Perhaps the most difficult place to grow plants is that shady spot in the yard. It's very easy to name plants that thrive in full sun, but full shade, well that's tougher.

"A favourite of many shade gardeners is the *Hosta* or the plantain lily," says Shelley Barkley, information officer with the Crop Diversification Centre-South. "The dark green to yellow-green leaves range from wide and heart shaped to narrow and linear, rough to smooth. They are often variegated which helps visually brighten shady spots. The plantain lily produces funnel-shaped flowers of white, lavender or violet, on long stocks."

Cont'd on page 4

Hosta crowns are long lived and can be allowed to spread indefinitely. Depending on the variety, they can be anywhere from 15 to 60 cm in height. Uses for hosta include edging, accent and ground covers in rock gardens and around water features.

"The evergreen *Bergenia*, or elephant ears, has both handsome foliage and flowers," says Barkley. "Pink flowers pop up in the spring in clusters brightening the otherwise dull perennial border. The leathery and oar or paddle shaped leaves turn crimson in the fall and stay that way for the winter. This is one perennial that does not like to be cut back in winter. At a height of 38 to 45 cm, this plant looks good in flower beds, perennial borders or around water features."

Goutweed (*Aegopodium*) can be just that – a weed. It spreads by creeping rhizomes so be warned and contain it by a sidewalk. Once established in a rock garden, it is almost impossible to eliminate. The plant grows almost anywhere and in any light condition. The white, dill-like flowers stand above the 25 to 30 cm plant by another 25 cm. The long-stemmed flower clusters work well in floral arrangements. Plants looking ratty during the summer can be cut back with the lawn mower to tidy them up.

"A plant that needs little description is the lily of the valley," adds Barkley. "This little perennial (15 to 25 cm) produces small white bell-like fragrant flowers in the spring. During the summer red berries replace the flowers. The plant is an excellent ground cover, spreads quickly, and requires little care. Keep in mind that the plant is poisonous."

Ostrich fern grows to a height of 36 to 48 cm. This non-invasive plant spreads by creeping roots. It works well around water features or in a woodland garden.

Masterworts have mostly basal leaves producing slender flowering stems with several flowers in clusters. The red, white or pink star-shaped flowers are produced nearly all summer. The flowers can be hung to dry just after they open. Use the 30 to 45 cm tall plant in the middle or back of flowerbeds in groups. They need an evenly moist soil.

"Auricula, oxlip and cowlip primroses are spring bloomers," adds Barkley. "These little beauties nestle into a shady-moist rock garden or woodland garden. They need very little care, but if the centre starts to die out, division is necessary. The plant will bloom in the spring for years with little tending. Flowers come in a wide range of colours like orange, red, yellow, blue or salmon. Primroses are at their best planted in groups or drifts. Other types of primroses worthy of trying include Cortusa, Tibetan and Siebald's primrose."

If Rayflowers (*Ligularia*), also commonly called elephant ears, get direct sun, the plants wilt. These are large plants, standing 90 to 120 cm, they may not be for every garden. Depending on which one of the ligularia you grow the flowers are either on spikes (narrow-spiked rayflower) or in clusters (big leafed rayflower) and can be yellow or orange and the coarse leaves can be either burgundy or green. The plant's exotic looks make it a must around ponds or streams or low lying moist shady areas.

Pulmonarias are a low maintenance perennial commonly called lungwort or Bethlehem sage. The plants have various degrees of silver spotting on the leaves which brighten up the shady corners of a yard. Bethlehem sage has pink blossoms in early to mid-spring while the lungwort produces blue blossoms later in the spring.

"Many of these and other shade loving perennials are available at garden centres throughout the province, they are worthy of a try."

Contact: Shelley Barkley (403)362-3391

Research centre evaluates NH_3 Controllers

If how anhydrous ammonia (NH_3) controllers perform is of interest, you may want to contact the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre.

"The Centre just released an evaluation report (#723) on four NH_3 controllers," says Greg Magyar, field technologist at the Centre.

The report contains information on the Dickey-john DjCCS100 and DjCMS100 NH_3 control and monitor system, the Micro-Trak MT3000 NH_3 control system, the Nitro-Trak NH_3 automatic control system and the Raven SCS440 NH_3 control system.

The Dickey-john, Micro-Trak and Raven systems use a heat exchanger to convert the liquid/gas anhydrous ammonia into liquid ammonia before metering. The Nitro-Trak system is a monitor controlled actuator assembly built to fit Continental Meters.

"The evaluation report contains information on quality of work, ease of operation and adjustment, ease of installation and operator safety on each controller," says Magyar. "The controllers were tested in the field and the lab with the majority of work being completed in the lab."

The controllers were tested under controlled NH_3 temperatures in the lab to determine metering accuracy, as well as the response time of the motorized control valve. The results showed good metering accuracy for each controller over a certain range of application rates and the response of the control valve to changes in ground speed and application rates was very good.

For more information or a copy of the evaluation report on NH_3 controllers, contact Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Farm Machinery Research Centre, 3000 College Drive South, Lethbridge, AB T1K 1L6 or phone (403)329-1212.

Contact: Greg Magyar (403)329-1212

Agri-News Briefs

A national approach to organic food regulations

Alberta gets things done. So, when a commitment to support the development of industry based national standards for organic products was reaffirmed at the 1996 annual conference of Federal-Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture, Alberta's Minister, Walter Paszkowski was asked to take the lead in coordinating the follow-up process to ensure implementation. All Ministers agreed that domestic and international market opportunities could be expanded once these standards were developed and that they should be addressed on a priority basis. Federal Minister Goodale will be sending a letter to all Provinces before the end of August addressing outstanding issues raised about organic products standards. Work will be completed on developing standards and regulations for organic products. For further information, contact Michael Dolinski, chairman Alberta Organic Food Committee, at (403)422-4873.

Eggs by the dozen

Alberta Egg Producers Board recently released a price change for marketing eggs in Alberta. As of July 28, 1996, processors will be paying producers prices set under the new price schedule. Since August 1995, prices to registered producers have increased by 14 cents across the board. Price per dozen for Canada Grade A extra large and large size are now $1.46, up from $1.32 in '95. Canada Grade A medium size will net the producer $1.35, up from $1.21 this time last year. Cost of feed grains have played a major role in the increased prices. For more information, contact Martin Zuidhof, poultry specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)427-4608.

Medicine Hat, home to Alberta's Outstanding Young Farmers

Gerald and Dallas Weiss were named the Outstanding Young Farmers for the Alberta Northwest Region. All nominees in the competition were selected on the basis of progress in their agricultural career; soil, water and energy conservation practices; crop and livestock production history; financial management practices; and contribution to their community and province. The Weiss' have operated a mixed farm, dairy, beef and grain, in the Medicine Hat area for 13 years. Along with their three children, Gerald and Dallas are actively involved in their community. The Medicine Hat Dairy 4-H Club, Alberta Institute of Agrologists, Farmhouse Fraternity, Newell Holstein Club and others have benefited from their support. The Weiss' will represent agriculture in Alberta at the National Finals Competition during Toronto's Royal Winter Fair in November.

Alberta requesting an extension to the 1995/96 crop year

In many areas in the province, especially northwest and southeast Alberta, grain elevators are experiencing severely congested conditions. As a number of points have little to no space for additional storage and few car orders to relieve the congestion in the short term, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Walter Paszkowski has written Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Goodale requesting an extension to the 1995/96 crop year. The extension would allow farmers to complete their deliveries and take advantage of the old crop prices and the 1995/96 freight rate levels. For more information, contact Brian Hlus, Executive Assistant to the Minister, at (403)427-2137.

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AGRI-NEWS

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To let be or not to let be, that is the question

Taking corrective action for crop diseases is a difficult decision at any time. Estimating how a disease will affect yield and putting a price on that loss are key when making the decision to take action or not.

"Chemical controls are quite expensive, so you need to calculate break-even points before you take action," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In most cases, though, it is too late for corrective action when the disease has progressed far enough to see how much damage it will do. A good management decision relies on accurately assessing the level of disease infection, guessing on climatic conditions which will affect disease progression and knowing the effect all of these factors will have on yield."

We have ideal conditions in many parts of Alberta for the development of some diseases now. Barley and wheat leaf diseases are showing up in many fields. Moist conditions promote these diseases if temperatures are high. At this stage in crop development, most crops are fully headed and spraying with a fungicide will not be effective.

"This is the time of year when many producers are wondering about sclerotinia in canola," adds Hockridge. "The ideal time to spray is when the blossoms are the brightest. There may still be some benefit to spraying for sclerotinia in some areas."

Nutrient deficiencies often start to show after plants are quite mature. It is too late to do anything about those that are immobile anytime after planting. Correcting micronutrient problems, or even some of the mobile macro elements can pay off quite late in development of the plant. Even for these elements it is too late once the heads have started to fill.

"Most crop problems become more obvious as plants get closer to maturity," says Hockridge. "Deciding if it is best to take corrective action or to accept that it is too late requires knowledge of crops, soils and products, a good vision of how things are going to unfold and sound judgement in putting all of the parts together."

Even though it is too late to do any corrective applications this year, producers should take note of any abnormalities and take steps to prevent reappearance of them in the next growing year.

Contact: *Ron Hockridge*
(403)361-1240

This Week

To let be or not to let be, that is the question 1
4-H judging excellence rewarded 2
Wheat production and trade 2
Canada thistle on Alberta pastures 3
As the worm turns-up 3
Stormy July 4
Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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4-H judging excellence rewarded

"The 70-competitors at the 10th annual provincial 4-H judging competition took part in a very competitive judging contest," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist. "The judging expertise displayed was of a very high calibre. This along with the exclusive sponsorship of Alberta Treasury Branches and the fine hospitality of the Olds Agricultural Society resulted in a successful event."

"Groups of 4-H members such as this, exemplify why Alberta Treasury Branches continues to be a proud sponsor of 4-H in Alberta," says Rhonda Stearns of the agriculture services department of Alberta Treasury Branches.

Sixteen contestants earned the right to attend other shows and judging competitions. Rick Hadwin of the Consort 4-H Multi Club scored the highest point total over the two-day competition. He claimed top spot as the overall judge and was top in placings. For his efforts, he won a trip to the Denver National Western Stock Show next January. The trip is sponsored by the UniBloc Canada.

Three others from the top sixteen finishers will make up the Alberta team at the Denver Western Round-up held in January 1997. Compete against 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) teams from across the U.S. will be: Kate Kroetsch (third) of the Hastings Coulee 4-H Beef Club, Erin Krause (fourth) of the New Norway 4-H Beef Club, and Sharon Gould (sixth) of the Stavely Stampeders 4-H Club.

Four other delegates will be travelling to Billings, Montana to compete in the Northern International Livestock Exhibition (NILE) in October. They are Jennifer Walker (second) of the Falun East 4-H Beef Club, Amie Bignell (fifth) of the Stony Plain Light Horse Club,

Trevor Hagel (seventh) of the Beiseker 4-H Beef Club, and Carrie Cholak (eighth) of the Lamont 4-H Beef Club. This trip is jointly sponsored by the Alberta Canada All Breeds Association (ACABA) and UniBloc Canada.

The other eight provincial contestants qualified to attend the Canadian Western Agribition and compete in its international 4-H judging seminar. They are (in order of their finish) Kelly Butler of the New Norway 4-H Beef Club, Kurt Trefiak of the Edgerton 4-H Beef Club, Kelly Ulry of the Olds 4-H Multi Club, Jennifer McDonald of the Duffied 4-H Club, Richard Grand of the Olds Multi Club, Dalyce Wesley of the Namao Trail Busters 4-H Club, Heather Scott of the Bergen 4-H Beef Club and Stephanie Edge of the Jumping Pound 4-H Beef Club. This trip is sponsored by UniBloc Canada.

"The strength of the overall members' abilities can be seen in the fact although two participants won species classes, they didn't make the top 16" says Wiegman. Those two were Matthew Gosling of Bow Valley 4-H Beef Club who won dairy judging and Marco Slingerland of the Wild and Wooly 4-H Sheep Club who topped the sheep class.

Senior 4-Hers qualify for this provincial contest through district and regional events. The provincial competition includes instructional and information clinics. Participants judge 15 livestock competition classes – dairy cattle, beef cattle, light and heavy horses, swine and sheep conformation. Their evaluation includes written and oral reasons. They're also rated through a written quiz, microphone presentation and recall questions.

This is the third consecutive year the provincial event was held in Olds in conjunction with the annual Mountain View County Fair. The competition's exclusive sponsor is Alberta Treasury Branches.

For more information about the competition or complete contest results, contact Henry Wiegman in Edmonton at (403)427-2541. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman* *Robyn Bilsky*
(403)422-4444 *(403)422-4444*

Wheat production and trading

After reaching well above six dollars per bushel for some trading days in April and May, the U.S. wheat futures moved downward in June and July. On July 24, the September Minneapolis wheat futures closed at $4.62 per bushel, and September Kansas City wheat futures closed at $4.75 per bushel.

On July 12, USDA released estimates for the 1996 U.S. wheat crops. Winter wheat production is estimated at 40.4 million tonnes, up eight per cent from the June 1 estimate, but down four per cent from 1995. Total U.S. wheat production is projected at 61.6 million tonnes, up four per cent from 1995.

"These better-than-expected estimates and recent favourable growing conditions in most spring wheat areas all added more negative impacts on the wheat market," says Chuanliang Su, research assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "China's cancellations of some U.S. wheat purchases and concerns over further cancellations also put pressure on wheat prices. However, trade sources indicated that Canadian exports of wheat to China may stay at the typical five million tonnes in the coming year, even though China's total wheat imports may decline."

The 1996-97 world wheat production estimated by USDA is 575.1 million tonnes, down slightly from the previous estimate of 578.2 million tonnes. The world ending stocks were estimated at 102.92 million tonnes for 1995-96 and 110.39 million tonnes for 1996-97. These are both below the five year average of 123.57 million tonnes. The projected stocks/use

Cont'd on page 3

ratio of around 19 per cent for 1996-97 would be the second lowest in more than three decades. The tight world supply/demand situation is considered to be supportive to the wheat market.

"In Western Canada, crops are behind normal development due to late seeding and a cool summer," adds Su. "Any early frost will damage the quality of wheat crops. The early estimate of 1996 Canadian wheat production is 28.63 million tonnes, with an average yield of almost 33 bushels per acre. There are more concerns about quality rather than quantity of wheat crops in both Canada and the U.S."

On July 16, the Canadian Wheat Board raised 1995-96 payments between $7.00 and $10.00 per tonne for most grades of wheat and $7.00 to $25.00 per tonne for most grades of durum. The latest CWB's Pool Return Outlook (PRO) for 1996-97 was released on July 25 and PROs were adjusted downward to reflect recent declines in wheat futures.

"The U.S. winter wheat crop is basically made, with harvesting well underway," says Su. "The spring wheat crops in North America still depend on weather conditions in the next several weeks, especially the late developed crops in Western Canada. Given this uncertainty, high volatility is expected during this time of the year. The current wheat futures are low compared to their levels in April and May, but still high from an historical perspective. The potential for wheat futures to move lower exists, but likely to a limited extent given the tight world supply/demand situation."

Pricing some of the new-crops at the current levels (October Winnipeg wheat futures closing at $202.30 per tonne on July 24) is encouraged for conservative producers. Wheat options can be used to lock in a floor price as well as to take advantage of a price increase. Producers who can afford more risk, if preferred, may wait and lock in prices when the market gets a near-term rebound, which is not impossible.

Contact: *Chuanliang Su*
(403)422-2887

Canada thistle on Alberta pastures

Canada thistle has been a serious problem for years. It is an invader on pasture and grazing can select for thistle, meaning that the more a pasture is grazed the more thistle pops up.

"We aren't about to give up on this problem," says Allan Macaulay, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A program to study Integrated Canada Thistle Control on Pasture was started last year. This year we have increased the number of treatment sites to four."

Long term control, for more than just one year, is what's being aimed for. It is important to kill the small plants, the ones that are only six inches tall. They are the ones that sustain the problem. To that end, what's needed is more even coverage of herbicide on pasture using a boom sprayer.

There are almost as many suggestions as there are thistles, it seems. Different mixes of herbicides and mowing just before a rain have been recommended. Many of the recommendations will be tried this year at the sites.

Why is Canada thistle so hard to control? There are a few reasons:

- ther e are 10 different varieties;
- one plant can produce 5000 seeds and those seeds can remain viable in soil for 20 years;
- it has horizontal and vertical roots;
- a single plant can spread 6 metres horizontally, 6 metres vertically and can produce 500 metres of roots in one season with large carbohydrate reserves;
- a three millimetre piece of root can produce a new plant;
- virtually no grazing livestock raised in Alberta will eat the plants growing in pasture;
- over-grazing is great for increasing thistle populations; and
- there are virtually no available herbicides registered for use on pasture that kill thistle completely.

"My personal bias is that we need to hit these weeds hard and thoroughly for at least two seasons to be effective," adds Macaulay. "Otherwise, it's an annual event. We need to use more accurate equipment and get even coverage, using a well calibrated boom sprayer where possible."

Thistles creep in from the edge. They start on brush piles and other bare ground. Check these spots as thistle needs some bare ground to get going. Preparing land before planting to pasture by doing a preharvest Roundup application or two before seeding can be effective. An alfalfa rotation is the most effectively used method of biological control for Canada thistle.

Information on this study sites should be available by November, 1996.

Contact: *Allan Macaulay*
(403)674-8213

As the worm turns-up

There's good news and some not so good news on the Bertha Army Worm this year. In the Brooks area the prognosis is good, with tolerable number of Bertha Army Worms being caught in pheromone traps.

In other areas the traps have indicated that some pest control may be needed.

"There is some spraying being done in canola fields in southern Alberta, in and around the Vulcan area," says Michael Dolinski, provincial entomologist with Alberta Agriculture,

Cont'd on page 4

Food and Rural Development. "Numbers aren't tremendously heavy, about 20 to 40 per square metre. It's hard to tell how widespread the infestation is."

The province uses a pheromone trap system across the province to keep tabs on population numbers of this pest. Approximately 20 Bertha Army Worm larvae per square metre is an appropriate level of infestation to economically consider doing some pest control.

"The pheromone trapping system indicates that in the south, around the Vulcan -Arrowwood area, there is extremely high risk as the infestation of Bertha Army Worms is high," says Dolinski. "Generally, the population dwindles as you go east and north toward Brooks and to Medicine Hat. Up along the Saskatchewan border, we have fairly high numbers which indicate there may also be some risk in that area."

The Peace country is unique in that the traps don't work up there. That means there isn't a good way to measure the situation.

"Talking to Alberta Agriculture's specialist in Fort Vermilion, the farmers have been spraying for the last few weeks," adds Dolinski. "The infestation seems to be isolated in the MD. of Mackenzie. Farmers should be watching the situation in that area very carefully. The crops there are very advanced compared to the rest of the province, so the Berthas started up there."

There were Bertha Army Worm in the MD. of Mackenzie last year and that's usually an indication that the problem will get worse. There is no data to estimate the potential risk for the rest of the Peace region. Specialists, however, don't think the risk is very high.

"The secret is getting out into the fields and checking for Berthas," says Dolinski. "That means getting right into the field, beating the plants, knocking the worms to the ground and then getting down there to do a physical count. If you find more than 15 in a square metre, you're approaching the level where you need to consider spraying."

With Bertha Army Worm, only one generation is present, so what you see is what you have. One spraying, if necessary, will do the trick in getting rid of them. The stage of crop development does not play into the equation as Bertha Army Worm will continue to feed on the canola even in swaths. Really, the only alternative is spraying.

Contact: Michael Dolinski
(403)422-4873

Stormy July

There were reports of hail, damaging winds, funnel clouds and flooding in July. Severe summer weather caused damage to crops and property in various parts of Alberta.

"July is one of the wettest months of the year," says Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We experienced near normal precipitation which provided generally good moisture conditions for agriculture production in central and northern Alberta. The southern region, however, reported the lowest precipitation totals for July which caused drought stress in dryland crops in some areas."

Lethbridge reported only 11.5 mm of precipitation, 25 per cent of normal.

Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest precipitation total, 156.8 mm or 147 per cent of normal.

The north east and north west were the wettest regions in Alberta. In those areas, crops were stressed by water logged soils in low lying parts of fields. Amounts of 50 to 120 mm, or 50 to 170 per cent of normal were reported.

The provincial average precipitation was 2.2 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 69.5 mm. These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"July began with above normal temperatures changing to cooler weather by the end of the first week," says Dzikowski. "Record minimum temperatures were reported in the south and the Peace on July 5 and 7."

Above normal temperatures were reported in the Peace region the second week of July while the rest of Alberta reported slightly below normal temperatures. Cool and wet weather dominated the Peace region the third week of July. Temperatures were near normal for the rest of the month.

"Most Alberta locations reported temperatures within one degree of normal with an average temperature 0.3 degrees below normal," adds Dzikowski. "Provincial growing degree days for July were about one day behind in the Peace region and near normal for all other regions. April 1 to August 4 degree days are behind three to five days in the southern region, and seven to 14 days in all other regions."

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Agri-News Briefs

Weisenburger takes helm of AIC

Ron Weisenburger, of Edmonton, Alberta, is the 1996-97 president of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC). AIC is a national federation of 18 professional and scientific agriculture organizations. The individual members of these 18 organizations encompass virtually every aspect of the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector. Weisenburger is a past president of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIA) and has served as AIA's representative on the AIC Board of Directors. An AIA member for over 25 years, he has also been a member of the Canadian Society of Animal Science for over 20 years. Weisenburger, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is a member of the department's policy secretariat. His current focus is on information highway planning, provincial regulatory review, developing farm income support policy alternatives and inter-provincial trade negotiations and implementation. For further information, contact Ron Weisenburger at (403)422-1821.

Making the move to direct seeding

Are there benefits to direct seeding over conventional tillage? Which crops work which ones don't? What special considerations do you need to keep in mind if making the move? Where do you start? Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has put together a series of factsheets on direct seeding that can answer the questions you have. The factsheets can be picked up at your local agriculture office, ordered from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or called up on the Internet. For access on Internet, call up Agriculture's home page, www.agric.gov.ab.ca, click on 'publications', then click on soils. Info on direct seeding can be found under direct seeding and under soil and water conservation.

Cow $ense '96

On August 21, 1996 it will be held in Clyde, Alberta. On August 22, 1996, the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin will be the site for the Cow $ense '96 Conference. If you're serious about producing beef cattle, this is a must attend meeting. Topics to be discussed will include beef market outlook and strategies, beef marketing alliance, common sense approach to beef cow herd health, and low cost feeding strategies. Speakers include Larry Hicks, a beef cattle marketing specialist from Denver, Colorado, John Grande, a Montana rancher who is a founding director of the Western Beef Alliance, Dr. Swan, a cattle producer with a veterinary background from the Lac La Biche area, along with beef specialists from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. To guarantee your attendance, reserve early. For further information, contact the Wetaskiwin Agriculture office at (403)361-1240.

Alberta Agriculture and Food Council

Six new members were selected to join the Alberta Agriculture and Food Council (AAFC). New members are: Ken Gibson, Edmonton, CEO/President of Alberta Food Processors Association; Bryan Hearn, St. Paul, member of Alberta Soil Conservation Tillage Society and former director of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada; Jack Kalisvaart, Gibbons, vice-chair of the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation; Ken McCready, Edmonton, regional director for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Ian Morrison, Edmonton, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics at the University of Alberta; and Ed Rodenburg, Calgary, General Manager, Agribusiness with Alberta Pool. The Council, composed of up to 23 people, has a membership that reflects the breadth and depth of the agriculture and agri-food industry.

Ostrich processing and marketing workshop

Don't stick your head in the sand. This workshop will be the place to be to hear all ideas and, together, develop a plan of action to help move the industry forward. If you're an ostrich producer, ostrich processor, member or those interested in the ostrich industry, be sure to attend. The meeting will be held on August 24 and (tentatively) 25, 1996, at the Black Knight Inn, Red Deer. The cost is $15 per person to cover lunch and the meeting room, pre-registration is required. This is not a seminar, it is a workshop - participation and discussion are the order of the day. For further information, or to register, Jean Roth at (403)346-3851, Jay Champion at (403)638-2575, Vern Auld at (403)227-2916, or Lorraine Walker at (403)347-5912.

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AGRI-NEWS

August 26 , 1996

CANADIANA

OCT 18 1996

Ostrich – growing in Alberta

Extra lean. Low in fat. High in protein. All the right attributes for today's health conscious, decerning consumer. Ostrich meat is a healthy, tasty alternate to traditional red meats.

"It tastes similar to beef, but has its own unique flavour," says Sharon Fisk, ostrich breeder and Alberta Ostrich Breeder's Association president. "It's lower in fat and calories and has cholesterol levels similar to chicken breast meat."

But where can you get it, you ask? Upscale restaurants and butcher shops from Bonnyville to Medicine Hat are now offering ostrich to Albertans. Some of Alberta's finest dining establishments, such as the Rimrock Dining Room in Calgary's Palliser Hotel, Shauney's in Red Deer and the Edelweiss Dining Room at the Chateau Lake Louise.

The Canadian Ostrich Association has 700 members. Many of the 300 Alberta members are farmers that are diversifying their operations.

"For the last 10 years, ostrich breeders have worked diligently to build a production base that will support commercial markets with meat, hides, feathers and oil," says Delin Sheehan-Millang, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Today, producers are able to support a limited market of fresh and processed meats to introduce this unique, tasty, healthy red meat product to consumers in Alberta and across Canada."

The ultimate goal of the ostrich industry is to capture one per cent of the Canadian meat market. To reach this goal, the present Canadian ostrich population of 16,000 (10,000 in Alberta) needs to grow to 680,000. Industry experts forecast another five to 10 years before the Canadian ostrich commercial meat production is in full swing.

The sale of meat is the latest step in this fast growing ostrich industry. Other ostrich products, such as boots and cosmetics are making their way to consumers. Alberta Boot, a Calgary manufacture, is now crafting ostrich boots at prices that reflect the superior quality of good ostrich hides.

Elaine Massier of Bonnyville, a master herbalist for 15 years, has developed skin care products made from ostrich oil. Massier's skin care is a new line of products based on ancient knowledge. Ostrich oil was used as a cosmetic by the ancient Egyptians and Romans.

"Research conducted on ostrich oil has resulted in excellent quality cosmetic products," says Kristine Smith of Bluffton. Smith markets a line of ostrich oil hand creams, body lotions, beeswax, lip balms and specialty soaps.

"The market for ostrich meat is well established in Europe and Africa. In Alberta, it's just getting started," says Elvira Smid, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "During the winter of 1996/97, the Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association will be conducting

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Ostrich – growing in Alberta 1

Co-operatives – are they for everyone 2

Cattle and wildlife in riparian areas 2

Maintaining water quality on a woodlot 3

Hay preservatives 3

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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Farming for the Future Research. We will be testing consumer response to ostrich meat. Look for the Ostrich display and taste a sample of ostrich meat at trade shows in larger centres of southern Alberta."

Contact:	*Elvira Smid* *(403)529-3616* *Sharon Fisk* *President, AOBA* *(403)932-3832*	*Delin Sheehan-Millang* *(403)556-4220* *Darcee Robertson* *AOBA Office Manager* *1-800-416-0301*

Co-operatives – are they for everyone

With the rise in rural diversified, value-added and home based businesses, it may seem natural to form a co-operative for joint production, handling, storing or marketing. While co-operatives can be excellent business arrangements, they are formal corporations and must be incorporated under the Provincial or Federal Corporations Act. Co-operatives are corporations! Reports must be filed annually with the Companies Branch and taxes filed as a corporation. The rules governing co-ops are specified under the Co-operatives Associations Act of Alberta. The co-op must file a Memorandum of Association stating its purpose, name, if there is share capital, the amount and value of shares, and the by-laws of the association. By-laws must follow the rules set down within the Act and be approved by the Director of Co-operative Activities.

"There are valid economic and social reasons for forming co-ops," says Garry Bradshaw, management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A co-op is usually formed to increase revenues or reduce costs of individual members. This may be done through reduced costs of supplies, increased revenues through prices or market share, or increased service through the hiring of specialists. As long as the co-op covers its costs, including depreciation and long run capital costs, profits can accrue to individual members rather than to the co-op itself. All of the costs must be covered. These issues should be dealt with before the actual formal document is completed."

In a co-op, each member or shareholder has only one vote no matter the value of their share capital, price of their membership or amount of business they do through the co-op. There can be no voting by proxy or any other assigning of voting power. This may be exactly what the individuals want. Individuals doing the most business, however, may eventually feel they should have a greater say. In this case, a co-operative form of business is not what is wanted, or should only be used for a few of the start-up years.

"Another thing to keep in mind is the value of co-operative shares cannot increase in value," says Bradshaw. "Their original, or par value is always the same no matter how much money the business makes or the value of its assets. Any and all profits and increased capital value must be distributed to the members or shareholders as dividends. These dividends do not have to be paid out each year. In fact, most businesses require a large percentage of the profits as working capital to keep the business operating."

Co-operatives must have 10 or more members unless formed for purchasing farm machinery or as a Marketing Association where they can have as few as six members.

"Co-ops file taxes as a corporation and, if they qualify, can use the small business tax credit to reduce the rate to approximately 19 per cent on the first $200,000 of yearly income," adds Bradshaw. "If a co-op acts as an agency for its members, or as a trust for the ownership of capital assets, the method of filing taxes is different than if it is acting as a principal in a business of its own."

Members and shareholders are liable for debts and legal obligations of the co-op only to the value of their shares or membership fees. Directors on the other hand have a responsibility to ensure the business operates according to law and have liability over and above that of members.

"It is important to specify clearly the management of a co-op," says Bradshaw. "The members elect a board of directors who hire or appoint a manager for the business. The manager will manage the business within the guidelines laid down by the directors. Well written, clear job descriptions and terms of employment are a must so members, directors, manager and employees understand each other, their roles and responsibilities."

As a formal business arrangement, the formation, operation and termination of a co-op requires the services and advice of professional lawyers, financial specialists and accountants. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's District Farm Management, Business Development and Organizational Development Specialists can assist when co-ops or other business arrangements are being considered.

Contact: *Garry Bradshaw*
(403)556-4244

Cattle and wildlife in riparian areas

Riparian areas are lands along rivers, streams and wetlands where the vegetation is strongly influenced by the presence of water. They are lands important for forage production. They also maintain fish and wildlife populations, buffer the effects of floods and droughts and maintain water quality.

Since March 1994, Alberta has been involved in the Canada Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (CAESA) project. CAESA is aimed at showing how cattle and wildlife can coexist near riparian areas.

Cont'd on page 3

"The challenge for farmers is to manage riparian areas to meet the needs of both cattle and the wildlife dependent on these areas," says Richard Escott, one of Alberta's CAESA coordinators. "Landowners have been encouraged to participate in the project and test various management practices on their property. Regrowth of vegetation in these areas has then been observed and evaluated."

Depending on the area, number of livestock and the type of water body being dealt with, there are management practices that farmers and ranchers can consider.

"Fencing of riparian areas, a rotational grazing system, alternative watering sources have been investigated and have all shown positive results," says Roger Andreiuk with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Maintaining a corridor for wildlife habitat, whether in the form of a woodland bordering a lake or brush and native grasses along a stream, makes for good land and watershed management."

The three-year CAESA project continues until March 1997. Information on the project can be obtained by calling your County office or local Agriculture district office and asking for the CAESA project coordinator in the area.

Contact: Roger Andreiuk
(403)986-8985

Maintaining water quality on a woodlot

The impact of harvesting trees on water quality is one of the many management issues woodlot operators face.

"The greatest threat is disturbance of the soil surface," says Douwe Vanderwel, soil and water engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Bare soil surfaces are especially vulnerable to water erosion. Sediment carried to water bodies or streams can reduce water quality in the receiving waters."

The vulnerable areas in most woodlot operations are roads, landings and skid trails. Every effort should be made to allow for some cover protection for these areas. This can be gravel, woodchips or some other organic matter. Siting is also important. These areas should be located on flat land.

During logging it's important to maintain the organic matter surface without disturbing the soil. That means using the right equipment, leaving a generous amount of plant matter and not logging when conditions are too wet to prevent rutting.

'A big part of precipitation is taken care of through infiltration into the soil," says Vanderwel. "When soils are compacted, moisture infiltration is reduced and runoff is increased. Increased runoff usually leads to more water erosion and water quality problems."

Soil compaction can be reduced by using smaller equipment for skidding logs, using skidders with large rubber tires and by conducting operations when conditions are dry. Soil that is too wet is easily compacted. Soil moisture should be less than 30 per cent before venturing out on the land

Removing felled trees as soon as they're cut can reduce the probability of skidding logs under moist conditions later on.

Remember too, that whenever you remove forest cover, particularily in a clear cut operation, the hydrologic balances are changed," adds Vanderwel. "This likely means additional runoff from the cut area and that could lead to flooded culverts and stream bank erosion problems further downstream."

If using herbicides in a woodlot operation, avoid their use two to three days before anticipated heavy rains. Herbicides stick to the target plants rather than washing off. Picking a three to four day projected dry period for herbicide application will help to keep it on the plants rather than in the local water.

Contact: Douwe Vanderwel
(403)422-4385

Hay preservatives

In the form of acids, nitrogens and enzymes and bacteria, there are 64 registered forage additives, each with a different formulation and use. With the weather Alberta has experienced this year, producers have been wondering about the use of hay preservatives.

"Nitrogens are urea, or ammonia. They are mainly used in silages and enhance fermentation and increase quality," says Myron Bjorge, provincial forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Enzymes and bacteria's are water soluble, or granular inoculants for hay or silage. Reducing spoilage in higher moisture hay is the intent of these preservatives. The success of biologicals is largely determined by type of bale and moisture consistency."

Biologicals cost about $5 per tonne of feed and have variable levels of success.

"Acids are the most consistent of the preservatives," adds Bjorge. "The use of propionic or acetic acid is used to prevent mould growth. These acids have shown consistency up to 24-25 per cent moisture. A lot depends on baling and storing conditions."

Acids cost about $10 per tonne of feed and they are very corrosive to equipment.

"Hay preservatives do have their place," says Bjorge. "They may be feasible in export hay markets. Those markets, however, may only want hay treated with certain additives, so be sure to check with your potential market before using an additive. With on-farm use, look at the economics before making the decision to use additives."

Contact: Myron Bjorge
(403)782-8026

Agri-News Briefs

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Seasonal changes in lamb prices

After setting a record in June, lamb prices in North America slid back in July. Prices, however, are still high by historical standards. Producers are advised to be aware of seasonal changes of lamb prices. In the coming months, seasonal supply of new-crop lambs may help ease the tight lamb supply situation in North America. However, lamb prices will remain strong. In the coming months, Alberta slaughter lamb prices should remain near the $110.00 per cwt level. Lamb prices may be pressured downwards by the seasonal supply of new-crop lambs, but likely to a very limited extent. Both slaughter and feeder lamb markets remain as good marketing options for Alberta producers. For further information, contact Chuanliang Su, research assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-2887.

A skunk by any other name – is still a skunk

Identification of skunks is fairly easy. There are four skunk species found in North America but only one species calls Alberta home, the striped skunk. When you see the narrow white stripe on the black body that starts on the forehead and splits into two wider strips down either side of the body, leave a little extra room on your way by. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has issued a new factsheet on the biology and control of skunks, Agdex number 684-5. It includes information on identification, biology, behaviour, reproduction and both lethal and non-lethal control methods. Rabies has been present in the skunk population in areas of Alberta since the late 1970's. Skunks displaying any abnormal behaviour, such as acting tame or being active during the daytime, should be strictly avoided and reported at once to the nearest Agriculture Agri-Food Canada veterinarian. For further information, contact Bob Acorn, problem wildlife supervisor with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)674-8301. Copies are available through the local district offices or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Diagnostic Field School '96

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development once again held diagnostic field tours as part of the Diagnostic Field School project at the Ellerslie Soil Farm. The school gives industry specialists and producers a chance to view different cultivars and the response to various fertilizers and nutrient treatments, herbicides and fungicides. Treatments are applied to the test plots at varying times of development. Cultivars are grown in different rotations. Weather is the only uncontrolled variable. Hundreds of test plots are planted at the Soil Farm and are carefully logged and monitored. Results give producers information needed when making decisions on what crop to grow and what, if any, treatments to use. This year over 300 people attended the tours between July 23 and August 7. The Diagnostic Field School is held each year. For further information, contact Linda Hall at (403)427-2530.

AGRI-NEWS

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CANADIANA

JAN 22 1997

AgVentures

Emerging industries are a popular trend in the present agriculture economy. Information on emerging agriculture industries, niche markets and the export potential of commodities is becoming available.

"In today's global marketplace, we can produce new and unusual products not commonly used in Canada because they have export potential," says Dean Dyck, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Changing consumer preferences can also result in niche markets in our own country. Emerging agriculture industries certainly have more opportunities than a few years ago; however, they also come with special considerations and challenges because they are new and undeveloped in Alberta."

To address the issues and risks in these emerging industries, four business profiles have been developed for dried flowers, saskatoons, meat goats, and aquaculture. Each profile addresses seven key issues that are important to consider if you are looking at these industries:

- *industry highlights* gives an overall perspective of the industry including the status in Western Canada today, the issues involved in commercialization and the present and potential market trends;
- *regulatory aspects* examines the possible regulations of the industry;
- *marketing basics* discusses one of the biggest challenges in these emerging industries, whether to market the product directly to the consumer, wholesalers or retail chains;
- learn about producing the product in *production basics*;
- start the initial financial/investment analysis using the *economic/finance basics*;
- use the *resources* section to identify key information sources; and
- evaluate the industry using *key management issues*.

"In the next few months, profiles will also be released on market garden vegetables, greenhouses (bedding plants), herbs and spices, essential oils, ostriches, ginseng, and agri-fibre," says Dyck.

The AgVentures profiles are available through your local Agriculture district office or Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Dean Dyck*
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This Week

AgVentures 1

Agriculture and AITC speak to a global audience 2

Roll out the bales 2

4-H Conservation Camp has record-breaking attendance 3

Swathing Canola 3

Briefs 4

Coming Events 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Agriculture and AITC speak to global audience

On August 17 - 24, 1996, Alberta was host to the International Organization of Science and Technology Education (IOSTE) 8th Symposium. The event brought together about 300 science and education delegates from 50 different countries.

The theme of the symposium was science and technology education for responsible citizenship and economic development. The essence of that theme has been supported and worked toward by Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) and the agriculture industry in Alberta for years.

Partners in AITC — United Grain Growers, DowElanco, the Barley Commission, Canadian Institute of Biotech, Ag West Biotech, Alberta Food Producers, Alberta Meat Producers and Egg Producers, Alberta Potteries Ag Initiative and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development — made sure that agriculture had a strong presence at the symposium. Through the contribution of volunteer hours, financial sponsorship of third world delegates to the symposium, hosting of delegate tours, formal session presentations and co-sponsoring the meals for one full day, delegates to the event were exposed to the variety, importance and advanced technology of the agriculture industry in Alberta.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to showcase Agriculture in the Classroom," says Betty Gabert, AITC coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With the help and sponsorship of our major partners, AITC was able to conduct over three hours of seminars. The presentations made by the agriculture sector showed the role of technology will play as we work toward a sustainable global food supply. The agriculture sector was also the largest sponsor of visiting delegates who required assistance in travelling to the event."

With 200 presentations throughout the week, the symposium was a major show on technology and research. The event also featured 34 displays of which 24 were agriculture related. Agriculture involvement also included hosting meals for one of the event days.

"All sectors of the agriculture industry showed great commitment to the global audience," says Gabert. "A positive and balanced presentation of food production, processing and marketing was given. The industry demonstrated to the educators present the importance of sustainable agriculture to the global society and the role of science in a sustainable food supply."

Contact: Betty Gabert
(403) 427-4225

Roll out the bales

Haying season is rolling right along. The question many livestock owners are asking right now is, "how many bales will be needed this winter to feed cows?"

"Once you know how to figure out the formula, it's easy to do," says Susan Markus, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Working out the number of bales needed to winter a cow herd is not the same as balancing a ration. You may find that the nutrient quality of the bales is not good enough to meet the cattle's requirement and grain or other supplements may be needed."

Hay quality makes a difference in the quantity needed. Average to good quality hay can be consumed per day at about two per cent of a mature cow's body weight. Straw and poorer quality hays can only be consumed at about 1.5 to 1.75 per cent of body weight. While lactating, the cow may be able to consume up to 2.5 per cent of her weight in feed.

"These percentages are on a dry matter basis, so it is important to know the moisture content of the feed in order to accurately assess the feed consumption," says Markus. "Waste of about 10 to 15 per cent, to account for losses during transport, storage and feeding method, may need to be factored in to the total amount needed."

Using a cow herd with 120 head with an average weight of 1350 lbs as an example, the formula would go something like this. Two per cent of 1350 is 27 lbs of dry matter that a single cow will consume in a day. If each cow eats only hay in her ration and the hay has a moisture content of 15 per cent, 31 lbs of hay is needed for each cow per day. If it is assumed that cows will be on feed for 190 days, then 31 lbs multiplied by 120 cows multiplied by 190 days works out to 706,800 lbs of hay.

Once you know about how may pounds of hay are needed, divide that by the average bale weight to get a number of bales needed. If the average bale weight is 1200 lbs, then 590 bales would supply the needed amount of hay. If 15 per cent has been determined for losses or waste, the producer must add another 88 bales into the total (590 + 88) and 679 bales would be needed to over winter the herd.

If feeding silage, the cow still needs two per cent of body weight. However, silage has about 60 per cent moisture and that means that each cow would need 43 lbs of silage per day if that is all they will be fed. To feed the same herd of 120 head 43 lbs of silage for 190 days (120 head X 190 days X 43 lbs) 980,400 pounds of silage will be needed over the winter. Since there is often some spoilage, waste and other losses, adding 15 per cent (147,060 lbs) brings the total to 1,127,460 lbs or about 565 tons required.

Cont'd on page 3

"Adjustments should be made if the herd varies a lot in weight and age," adds Markus. "It may be necessary to work out requirements for first calf heifers and bulls separately from the rest of the mature cow herd as consumption can vary."

While it is impossible to predict the weather for the upcoming winter, livestock owners may want to consider a cold adjustment factor in their equation. Having an extra 20 per cent of feed on hand for those extreme cold spells makes sense. It is also wise to get a nutrient analysis completed on the feed so the ration can be balanced for the herd's needs.

Contact: Susan Markus
(403) 578-3970

4-H conservation camp has record-breaking attendance

4-Hers continue to show their concern for the environment as this summer 65 Alberta 4-H members participated in the 31st annual conservation camp from August 18-23, 1996. They spent the week examining issues affecting the environment.

Nature trails, fern glades and scenic Battle Lake surround the Alberta 4-H Centre. Situated 60 kilometres west of Wetaskiwin, it's the ideal setting for the conservation camp. The camp is jointly sponsored by Alberta Power Limited and TransAlta Utilities Corporation."

"As participants arrived, they were presented with an environmental case study featuring the fictitious 4-H Ranch," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist and camp director. "The ranch is for sale and there are several interested buyers: ranchers, corporate farmers, investors, fish and game enthusiasts, foresters, environmentalists, and recreation developers. Camp participants prepared a plan for the operation and development of the ranch using the "Five is One" theme."

The week's resource team consisted of specialists from Weyerhaeuser Canada, Alberta Environmental Protection, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and camp sponsors. Exploring the Centre's diverse ecosystems, these Alberta experts provided practical knowledge on five topics: soils, water, fish and wildlife, range management, and forestry.

"At the end of the week everyone participated in a mock development hearing judged by the field experts," says Sullivan. "After five days, the participants were aware of the complexity of making real-life decisions. During the role-playing they applied the information learned."

4-Hers are also encouraged to take the conservation message back to their local clubs and communities. Since 1975, the camper who best spreads the conservation message after attending the camp receives the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award. Conservation camp participants have until April 15, 1997 to submit their applications for the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award to the 4-H branch office, 200, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403) 427-4499

Swathing canola

Swathing at the right time improves the grade and yield of canola. Although most Alberta producers got off to a slower start this growing year, if the heat continues, swathing time will be soon.

"Polish, or early, types of canola can be straight combined with less risk of shattering than later Argentine types," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In most cases, Argentine types are also swathed. Late summer heat means that producers must make sure the crop is ready to swath. Otherwise, the rapid drydown could mean green seed or even shrunken seeds."

Swathing always requires an assessment of the whole field. If ripening is not even, the producer will have to make a judgement call on when the majority of the plants are at the right stage.

"Farmers should randomly sample the field in order to develop an overall picture of the crop," says Frank. "Pull each plant out of the ground and examine only the pods on the main stem. In general, you can safely swath when seeds on the bottom 33 per cent of the plant have changed colour. If there has been very hot weather, it's best to wait for the bottom 40 per cent of the plant to have seed colour change."

Cooler weather allows swathing a little sooner. Even partial colour change can be counted. Argentine types can be swathed with a lower seed colour change than Polish types. Seeds in the top will still be green but will be pliable when rolled between the fingers. If swathed too late, shattering losses can be very high and the large fluffy swath is more susceptible to wind.

"A pre-harvest Roundup application can be used to kill perennial weeds such as thistles and quack grass before swathing. Pre-harvest Roundup should be timed for about the same time as swathing. Producers should wait three days after the application to swath. Argentine types shatter easily, therefore this practice may not be advisable unless the weed infestation is very heavy. Do not apply pre-harvest Roundup to canola being grown for seed.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403) 362-1212

Agri-News Briefs

Nutrition Conference

The University of Alberta, Canadian Feed Industry (Alberta Division) and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are organizing the 17th Western Nutrition Conference. The conference will be held September 19 and 20, 1996 at the Fantasyland Hotel, West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton. A pre-conference symposium, sponsored by Halchemix Canada, will be held on site during the evening of September 18.

Advancing agriculture through technology

Technological progress, market forecasting, pesticide research and development, plant biotechnology, spraying equipment and environmental cropping practices are topics for discussion at the 44th annual national conference of the Crop Protection Institute. The conference will be held at the Westin Hotel in Calgary on September 15 - 18, 1996. Farmers are gearing up production in response to strong markets and prices, and opportunities are unfolding for the crop protection industry. The industry is getting together to confer and consider ways to make the most of new technology for the advancement of agriculture. Electronic commerce which is changing the way business is done, the dramatically increased demand for products and the promise of biotechnology are all subjects for presentation at the conference. For further information on the conference, contact Lois Caissie in Etobicoke, Ontario at (416) 622-9771 ext. 228.

Coming agricultural events

GrowTech 96
Miami Beach, Florida – September 8-10
RAI/EGI Exhibitions – (508) 664-6455, North Reading, Maine

Seed Analysis and Grading for Registered Seed Establishments Workshop
Olds College
Olds – September 9-11
Olds College – (403) 556-8321, Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – (403) 495-5395, Edmonton or (403) 292-4105, Calgary

96 Outdoor Farm Show
Burford, Ontario – September 10-12
Outdoor Farm Show – 1-800-563-5441 or (519) 822-2890-Guelph, Ontario

Specialist Workshop on Seed Analysis of Grasses and Legumes
Olds College
Olds – September 11-13
Olds College – (403) 556-8321, Olds; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – (403) 495-5395, Edmonton or (403) 292-4105, Calgary

Advancing Agrivulture Through Technology
44th annual national convention of the Crop Protection Institute
Westin Hotel
Calgary – September 15-18
Lois Caissie – (416) 622-9771, Etobicoke, Ontario

17th Western Nutrition Conference
Fantasyland Hotel – September 19-20
Edmonton
Rick Corbett – (403) 427-8906, Edmonton
Lynda Martell – (403) 427-6624, Edmonton
Judy Carss or Bev Cote – (403) 492-3236, Edmonton

2nd European Liquid Biofuels Forum
Graz, Austria – September 22-25
Joanneum Research – +43/316/876-335
e-mail address – biofuels@pbox.joanneum.ac.at

Canada Beef Export Federation - Seminar & Annual Meeting
Calgary – September 27-28
CBEF: (403) 274-0005; Fax: (403) 274-7275, Calgary

1996 National Extension Technology Conference
Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia – September 28-October 2
Bob Molleur – (706) 542-8965, Athens, Georgia; Bryan Shipman – (706) 542-5387, Athens, Georgia; Don Hamilton – (706) 542-5350, Athens, Georgia; listserv at NETC96-L@uga.cc.uga.edu

18th Canadian Waste Management Conference
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba – October 7-10
Jennifer Adams – (613) 723-3525, Nepean, Ontario

Ag Internet Marketing Conference
Chicago, Illinois – October 9-10
Graham Dyer, e-mail: gdyer@mgl.ca
Information will also be posted on their internet site at: www.agribiz.net

2nd World Congress Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences
Jaarbeurts, Beatrix Building, Congress Centre
Jaabeursplein, The Netherlands – October 20-24
FBU Congress Bureau – 31.30.253.5044/2728; Utecht, Netherlands; e-mail l.donkers@pobox.ruu.nl

Cows & Fish: Caring for your land and water
Western Heritage Centre
Cochrane – October 26
Kelly Chambers (403) 221-8367, Calgary

4-H Silver Anniversary Weekend and Silent Auction
Alberta 4-H Centre
Westerose – October 26-27
Vicki Berger – (403) 427-2541, Edmonton

Prairie West Horticultural Trade Show
Mayfield Inn & Trade Centre
Edmonton – November 7-8
Sue Grimm – (403) 489-1991, Edmonton

Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association Annual Convention
Mayfield Inn & Trade Centre
Edmonton – November 7-9
Sue Grimm – (403) 489-1991, Edmonton

The 8th World Ayrshire Conference
Western portion – Vancouver and Edmonton October 24-30
Maritime portion – Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick – October 31-November 3
Quebec portion-Riviere du Loup, Quebec City and Victoriaville – November 3-6
Conference portion – Montreal – November 7-9
Ontario portion – Ottawa and Toronto – November 10-16
Sylvie Mahannah – (514) 457-2010

Royal Agricultural Winter Fair
Toronto, Ontario – November 2-16
Canadian National Exhibition Grounds – (416) 393-6400, Toronto, Ontario

Northlands Farm Fair International
Agricom
Edmonton – November 2-10
Michele Weitzel – (403) 471-7260, or Roxanne Carr – (403) 471-7300, Edmonton

National 4-H Week
November 4-10
Carol Sullivan – (403) 427-4499

ANUGA Food Tech:International Food Technology Fair
Cologne, Germany – November 5-9
Deutsche Lanwirtschafts-Gesellschaft – +49/69/2478-80, Frankfurt, Germany

Canadian Finals Rodeo
Northlands Coliseum
Edmonton – November 6-10
Don Gray – (403) 471-7210

Prairie West Horticultural Trade Show
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton – November 7-8, 1996
Sue Grimm – (403) 489-1991; 1-800-378-3198;
fax (403) 444-2152
e-mail: lanta@planet.eon.net

Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton – November 7-8, 1996
Sue Grimm – (403) 489-1991; 1-800-378-3198;
fax (403) 444-2152
e-mail: lanta@planet.eon.net

Alberta Horticulture Congress
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton – November 7-9
Simone Demers Collins – (403) 422-1789, Edmonton

Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association Fall Conference and Seminar
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton – November 8-10
Darell Kavich – (403) 632-7399, Vegreville; Darcee Robertson – (403) 946-4032, Crossfield

Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association Seminar
Fantasyland Hotel, West Edmonton Mall
Edmonton – November 8-10
Sharon Fisk – (403) 932-3832, Cochrane or Alberta Ostrich Breeders Assoc. 1-800-416-0301

Farming Without Subsidies – The New Zealand Experience
Lincoln University, Lincoln, Canterbury, New Zealand – November 11-13
(Pre-conference and Post-conference tours also available)
Cy McAndrews – (403) 482-6517

2nd National Conference on Dairying
Toronto – November 13-14
Kerri-Sue Lang – (905) 342-2099, Toronto, Ontario

Saskatchewan Pork Symposium
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan – November 13-14
Wendy Hayes – (306) 933-5078, Saskatchewan

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) World Food Summit
Rome, Italy – November 13-17
FAO – 52253259 or 52253625, Rome, Italy

Outstanding Young Farmers National Awards Program
Toronto, Ontario – November 12-17
Canadian National Exhibition Grounds – (905) 430-3245

1996 Peace Region Farm Women's Conference
Golden Inn
Grande Prairie – November 14-15
Maureen Stamp – (403) 766-3091, Wembley; Cindy Cuthbert – (403) 538-5285, Grande Prairie; Mary Lundgard – (403) 835-4585, Fairview

Canadian Western Agribition
Regina, Saskatchewan – November 23-29
Regina Exhibition Park – (306) 565-0565, Regina, Saskatchewan

IRDC '96 Conference, jointly sponsored by Alberta Irrigation Projects Association and the
University of Lethbridge Water Resources Institute
Lethbridge Lodge Hotel
Lethbridge – November 25-28
Verna Lees, AIPA (403) 328-3063, Lethbridge;
e-mail – aipa@agt.net

Earthkeeping 25th Anniversary Convention
Nisku Inn
Leduc – November 29
Kathryn Olson – (403) 428-6981, Edmonton

Animal Care 95: Addressing the problems
Winnipeg, Manitoba – November 30
Manitoba Farm Animal Council – (204) 786-2620, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Flax: The Next Decade
Winnipeg, Manitoba – December 3-4
Flax Council of Canada – (204) 982-2115

Western Canadian Grazing Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer – December 9-11
Lorene Cunningham – (403) 443-7544, Three Hills

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer – January 10-12, 1997
Les Burwash – (403) 948-8532, Airdrie

1997 Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer – January 10-12, 1997
Carol Sullivan – (403) 427-4499

1997 Canadian Bull Congress
Camrose Regional Exhibition
Camrose – January 17-18, 1997
Teryl Fankhanel – (403) 672-3640, Camrose;
fax (403) 672-8140
e-mail: creceo@ccinet.ab.ca

Alberta Agriculture & Food Council Conference
Red Deer – January 18-19, 1997
Contact: (403) 427-2417; Internet - agric_food@tnc.com

Position Yourself for Precision Farming
Taber – January 20-21, 1997
Jane Brenner – (403) 223-1169, Taber; fax (403) 223-3412
Jack Payne – (403) 223-7907, Taber; fax (403) 223-3396
e-mail: Payne@agric.gov.ab.ca

Managing Agriculture for Profit Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer – January 28-30, 1997
Contact: 1-800-387-6030

Canadian Produce Marketing Association Annual Meeting
Banff – January 29-February 1, 1997
Phil Dixon – (403) 447-1860, Edmonton

International Conference on Agricultural Production and Nutrition
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. – March 19-21, 1997
William Lockeretz – Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155
e-mail: wlockeretz@infonet.tufts.edu

Farm and Ranch Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton – March 26-29, 1997

Global Affair '97, First International Ostrich Conference
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Country – April 4 - 6, 1997
Sharon Fisk – (403) 932-3832, Cochrane or Alberta Ostrich Breeders Assoc. 1-800-416-0301

International Symposium on Growing Media and Hydroponics
Windsor, Ontario – May 19-25, 1997
Dr. A.P.Papadopoulos – (519) 738-2251, Harrow, Ontario
e-mail: Papadopoulost@em.agr.ca

XVII International Grasslands Congress
Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon Saskatchewan
– June 8-9, 1997
International Grasslands Congress Office – (403) 244-4487, Calgary; fax (403) 244-2340

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.
   Fairview College at (403) 835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
   Lethbridge Community College at (403) 320-3311
   Olds College (403) 556-8355
   e-mail for **The Connection**
   73543.2137@compuserve.com
   Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403) 853-8400

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1996**? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates?

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). **Please include your telephone number**:

Please return this form by* November 22, 1996 *to:

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6
FAX (403) 427-2861

("Coming agricultural events" is published four times a year in **Agri-News**.
The next list will be **December 2, 1996**.
Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca.)

CANADIANA

OCT 18 1996

AGRI-NEWS

September 9, 1996

Harvest – a time for safety

No farmer wants to be injured or suffer down time during harvest. No farmer wants to see family or friends hurt or killed. But, during September each year there are three farm injuries seen at a health care facility every single day.

"The stress of getting the crop off is the main reason behind most farm accidents during harvest season," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Weather conditions, long hours, shortage of trained labour and down time doing repairs all contribute to farm injuries. Harvest has only just started and already there have been three harvest related fatalities."

There is not a farmer today who isn't aware of the hazards associated with the harvest season. Cutting corners and over taxing the body's system by putting just that extra hour or two in the field, can make such a difference.

To combat the painful statistics there are a few harvest hints that, although they've been heard before, warrant restating:

Rest – the body requires a certain amount of rest and, believe it or not, so does the mind. Small breaks throughout the work day will help;

Spare parts – a maintenance program for all harvest equipment should detect any problem areas, but a supply of spare parts: belts, bolts, chain links and other items, should be in the pickup located on the edge of the field being worked. Keep a good set of tools close at hand;

Emergency equipment – a working flashlight, a first aid kit, a good pocket knife, a 2 1/2 gallon water fire extinguisher, a 20 pound stored pressure dry chemical fire extinguisher and a communication link with the home quarter;

Trained workers – many farmers try to bring the crop in all by themselves. However, we all have to remember that "no one is an island". Get help! Round up the crew and check everyone out on their responsibilities. Don't assume that everyone will remember their training one year to the next, especially if your equipment or crops have changed. Every job procedure must be retaught. Not everyone has the same level of experience.

Give the machinery a break – combines need to have the chaff cleaned out around the engine and the grain truck needs to be cleaned of the stubble that gets up around the muffler. Fires in these areas have been a problem across the province in the past.

"Remember to fuel equipment after a reasonable cool down period and make sure people who are fuelling your machinery know where the right fuel is stored," adds Jones. "Be safe, work safe, and have a great harvest!"

Contact: *Eric Jones*
(403)427-4231

This Week

Harvest – a time for safety 1
Taking control of winter annual weeds 2
Renting grain storage 2
Mortality composting trial 2
Value straw correctly 3
United Nations and international affairs 4-H seminar 3
Before you spray 4
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Taking control of winter annual weeds

They germinate in the fall, keep growing after first frost, and then over-winter as seedlings or small rosettes. Then, in the spring, they flower and produce seed that is ready to start the cycle all over again come next fall.

Most plants don't survive winter because of damage from ice crystals forming in their cells. Winter annuals reduce water in their cells so ice crystal formation is reduced. They also produce long chain polymers, an antifreeze type substance. A good snow cover will keep the winter annuals green and healthy until spring.

"The rapid development of these weeds' flowering shoots, or bolting in the spring, gives winter annual weeds a competitive advantage over crops," says Linda Hall, agronomy specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Winter annuals deplete soil moisture and nutrients in fall and spring and, because of their highly competitive nature, must be controlled."

In conventional tillage systems, they can be controlled by tillage in spring or fall. In direct seeding systems, the winter annuals have an advantage as they are usually too mature to be controlled by in-crop herbicide.

"The best time to control winter annuals in a direct seeding system is in late fall, between late September to mid or late October," adds Hall. "Research on winter annuals has shown that the most effective control is a herbicide application as close to freeze up as possible when the weeds are young and most susceptible. The longer you wait, the more winter annual seeds will have emerged above crop residue and be vulnerable to the application."

If not controlled in the fall, there is the option of spring herbicide application. Spring application can be as effective as late fall application if the weeds are sprayed early.

"The best time to spray in the spring is before the end of April," says Hall. "Once the weeds have bolted, they are much more difficult and costly to eliminate."

The key to control is identification of winter annuals. Walking fields in spring and fall is the first step in control. Once identified, select a herbicide based on the type of weed present, herbicide costs and the crop intended in the coming growing season. Time application for late fall or early spring for best results.

Contact: Linda Hall
(403)427-7098

Renting grain storage

When there's a good crop to harvest, a choice between buying and renting grain bins needs to be made. If producers have enough storage for normal crops, they may prefer to rent space if they can. In situations like this, a common question often emerges about how much grain bins should rent for.

"Using current prices for bins and interest rates, with an allowance for risk added, means a rental charge of 12 to 16 cents per bushel for reasonable sized bins," says Ted Ford, financial management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Smaller bins cost more per bushel of capacity but require more labour to fill and unload so they rent for less. Little wooden bins would not attract very much for rent because of the labour involved in using them."

A hopper bottom on a bin may add another three to four cents per bushel, but provides additional storage and convenience.

"In the end, it will be supply and demand in any area that will determine the rental rate," says Ford. "When there's lots of demand the rental rate will creep up. When there is less demand, rental rates drop."

Rental opportunities for the rest of the year are virtually eliminated if a bin is rented out during the fall harvest season. The person renting out the bin would want rent for a full year so the renter might as well use the storage space for a while. On the rare occasion a bin is rented out during an off season rent might be charged on a monthly basis.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's local farm management specialists can be contacted for further information on grain storage rental and other custom rates.

Contact: Ted Ford
(403)556-4218

Mortality composting trial

Over 7 million kilograms of mortality is disposed of on Alberta poultry farms each year. A common concern for producers is to use environmentally and biologically safe as well as economical methods of disposal.

There are many alternatives, such as covered pits, fabricated pits, incineration, municipal land fills, and fermentation. Each of these methods can be effective, but each has their limiting factors.

Composting is another option that warrants examination. Composting uses an environmentally friendly, natural process that provides a useful end product. The process uses raw materials that are always on hand, eliminates possible water and air pollution and is relatively inexpensive.

"Waste management or mortality disposal is an important issue in Alberta," says Rich Smith, agricultural engineer with Alberta

Cont'd on page 3

Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Composting is a two stage, natural process where beneficial bacteria reduces the carcasses into a useful compost. The process has proven successful in many areas but has yet to be tested under Alberta conditions."

With the assistance of the federal/provincial Agriculture Environmental Sustainability Agreement, the MD of Foothills Agriculture Service Board, and Reg Ference, a broiler producer, a demonstration facility was built at the Ference farm in Black Diamond. The trial will measure and examine the ideal ratios of raw materials needed (litter, straw, water and birds); the impact of ambient temperatures on the composting process; a bacterial analysis of the final product and its fertilizer value; an analysis of time and labour in the process; and a financial analysis.

"The concept of composting mortality is relatively new here in Alberta and many people are not familiar with it," says Smith. "A great deal of "educating" had to be done when we were applying for the necessary permits from the local municipal authorities. We felt it was extremely important that everyone impacted by the trial be fully informed of just what is involved and how the process works. The team wanted to address any concerns individuals had before the trial got underway."

So far the project appears to be a viable alternative to other methods of mortality disposal. There is still a lot to learn and fine-tune in dealing with this process. Inquiries from producers, governments and municipal, health and environmental departments and groups have been received. "This two-year trial is a proactive step to establish a safe and effective disposal method before strict rules and regulations are imposed on the industry," adds Smith. "Composting doesn't get rid of mortalities, it safely transforms them into a useable end product."

Documentation of this trial is maintained on the Internet by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Process and detailed results can be viewed by keying in http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestck/poultry/ppw02.html.

Contact: Rich Smith
(403)948-8537

Value straw correctly

Recent cost increases in fertilizer and machinery haven't made it easier to decide whether to bale or spread straw.

"The potential for a large volume of straw in central and northern Alberta, and the demand for a smaller volume in the south, may result in farmers valuing straw incorrectly," says John Erdman, P.Ag., farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "An error of only a few dollars per bale can result in extra costs of several thousand dollars in a single season."

On average, a 1000 pound straw bale will contain 11 pounds of nitrogen, three pounds of phosphorus, 25 pounds of potassium and two pounds of sulphur. Fertilizer prices vary, but current retail value of these nutrients as fertilizer totals about $10 per round bale ($3.60 as N, $1 as P, $5.40 as K and $0.40 as S). The break-even value of straw behind the combine would be a minimum of $10 per bale.

Carbon, the main ingredient of straw, is responsible for improving soil texture, porosity, resisting erosion and numerous other beneficial characteristics. The value of improving soil carbon varies depending on the soil. Although carbon has not been successfully priced, in some cases it may be worth as much as all other nutrients combined.

"While straw can be, and is, sold in the windrow; there are often other operations done to it by the grower before any value is received," adds Erdman. "The cost of these operations must be considered to arrive at a proper decision. If the straw is baled and stacked those costs must be added to the basic value to arrive at a sale price. If large straw volumes require extra tillage to be done, those costs must be subtracted from the basic value of the straw."

Baling adds about $6 per bale to the cost. Stacking adds another $2. For straw that does not require any extra cultivation to work in the residue, break-even price would be about $18 per bale, if baled by the grower.

If extra tillage passes are required, the price should be reduced appropriately. A cultivation pass costs about $6 per acre. In a crop estimated to yield three bales per acre, this reduces the cost of the bale as nutrients by $2 per extra pass required. Depending on the type of equipment used and the volume of straw, the actual cost per bale will vary on each farm.

"The object is to obtain the maximum return from straw," says Erdman. "It makes little sense to sell straw below cost. In some cases it may be cheaper to spread straw and buy the amount needed. On the other hand, if straw can be sold for more than its value to the farm, it may be wise to sell it and replace nutrients through next years' fertilizer."

Contact: John Erdman
(403)632-5400

United Nations and international affairs 4-H seminar

From August 25-30, 1996, two Alberta 4-H members attended the 44th annual Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs (SUNIA) held at the Goldeye Centre near Nordegg, Alberta.

"Geoff Bishop of Langdon and Kyla Kotke of Fort Macleod took part in the seminar along with over 130 high school students, mainly from urban Alberta," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H program specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and

Cont'd on page 4

Rural Development. "The delegates participated in a program that is designed to explore the political, economic and social dynamics of international affairs with diplomats from the United Nations, Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade."

Bishop and Kotke earned the right to attend SUNIA at the annual 4-H Provincial Selections Program. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement plus interpersonal skills.

The sponsor for this 4-H award trip is the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403)948-8510

Before you spray

Aerial preharvest application of Round Up has been approved by the Federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

"This is a temporary approval and registration for 1996," says Walter Yarish of the pest prevention management unit, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Aerial Round Up preharvest application has a number of restrictions attached to ensure safe application. Before spraying it is very important to know and understand the restrictions." The guidelines and restrictions include:

1. Aerial applicators must comply with provincial licensing requirements;
2. Applicators must meet aerial application experience requirements;
3. Applicators must have completed a Round Up training seminar;
4. Aircraft must be equipped to meet acceptable drift management standards;
5. Applicator must have drift insurance;
6. A buffer zone of 100 metres must be around all sensitive areas, this includes wetlands, farmsteads, gardens, shelte belts, etc.;
7. Application must be avoided under conditions with a high probability of drift -including temperature inversions;
8. Cannot be applied to crops grown for seed production or after the first damaging frost;
9. Cannot be applied until the crop has less than 30 per cent or less moisture in the seed. Application at a higher moisture content can result in unacceptable residue in harvested crops.

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"Pesticide monitoring programs are being enhanced to ensure that sensitive areas are protected," says Yarish. "Damage complaints should be reported to provincial regulatory agencies by calling toll free 1-800-222-6514."

If you have questions regarding this temporary approval or for further information regarding aerial application and guidelines, contact the pest prevention and management unit at (403)422-4794.

Contact: *Walter Yarish*
(403)422-4794

Agri-News Briefs

Predicting the 'value-added' future

Adding value to a product and finding a niche market are not easy things to do. Trying to predict what consumers in the next century will be looking for can be tricky business. Ideas are many and varied. Some unique ones include: ice cream bar formulations in assorted flavours, packaged in 'two-bit' pieces; C-packs, the smaller cans, jars, and packages targeted to convenience stores and speed markets; sophisticated meal kits in attractive cook-and-serve packaging combining one-stop shopping with minimal cleanup and no leftovers; new flavours, colours and shapes of 'fantasy pasta'; a new category of nearly cooked cuts of meat sold chilled and ready-to-finish; and sophisticated bread spreads especially those based on sun dried tomatoes and bruschetta-inspired toppings. Trends are significant factors that producers and processors in the province should watch. For more information, contact Kerry Engel, rural business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)349-4465 in Westlock.

How to start a new business venture

Learn by doing. Live the new business venture development process by working through it. A new pilot project has been set up using the successful 'clinic' approach of the MBA program at the University of Calgary. Start with an initial business idea, learn how to launch the business and develop growth. Develop your own business idea or take suggestions from the instructional team. The pilot, a three module course, can accommodate 12 students working on individual projects. Dates are: module one – three days, September 25, 26, 27, 1996; module two – two days, December 12, 13, 1996; and module three – one day, February 20, 1997. The course will be held at the Centre for New Venture Development, Faculty of Management, University of Calgary. For further information on this course, contact Doug Barlund at (403)556-4245 in Olds.

AGRI-NEWS

September 16 , 1996

CANADIANA
OCT 18 1996

Milk, who needs it

We're accustomed to encouraging babies and young children to "drink your milk" and many a mother gets quite distressed if her child won't drink it, even with chocolate flavouring added! We recognize that children need milk so they'll grow into adults with healthy bones and teeth. However, healthy bones and teeth need to be kept that way – and that's why we all need milk – more specifically, the calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D in milk.

"About two to three pounds of the adult body is calcium – and 99% of that is in bones and teeth," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Besides its role in bones and teeth, calcium has a number of other functions. It plays an important role in blood clotting and in transmission of nerve impulses. In order to carry out these other tasks, the body maintains a constant level of calcium in the blood. Maintaining this level is so important that calcium will be taken from the skeleton if it's needed in the blood."

It's normal for bone to be constantly remodelled and reshaped throughout life, so we need a constant supply of calcium. Adult women need 700 milligrams a day; men need 800 milligrams. (A cup of milk provides about 300 milligrams of calcium.) Many adults do not get enough calcium and the result is that their bones do not rebuild normally.

"Osteoporosis, a disease characterized by thinning of the bone tissue, is more common in older people, especially women," says St. Onge. "The disease can progress to the point where bones can break from everyday actions such as turning over in bed. Osteoporosis is painful, costly, and crippling. There are several factors which increase risk for osteoporosis, including a low calcium intake throughout adult life. The most important preventive measure we can take is to build our bone mass to its maximum – which happens by about age 35. To do this, we need enough calcium and regular weight-bearing exercise."

Many adults are unable to drink milk. As people get older they may lose the enzyme which digests lactose, milk sugar. In these cases it is important to incorporate alternate foods into the diet to provide calcium.

"In Canada, the most familiar food consumption patterns include dairy products as the primary source of calcium," adds St. Onge. "If you're unable to drink milk, try cheese or yogurt. They have almost no lactose. A cup of yogurt provides the same amount of calcium as a cup of milk. Fifty grams of cheddar cheese (a slice and a half of regular thickness processed cheese) contains as much calcium as a cup of milk. While some green vegetables do provide calcium, our bodies can't absorb it very well – you'd have to eat four cups of broccoli or beet greens every day to get enough calcium!"

Mom was right. Drink your milk!

Contact: *Linda St. Onge*
(403)427-4367

This Week

Milk, who needs it 1
Wallflowers and cattle market darlings 2
Non-traditional crops, 'cumin' or going 2
Early weaning has its advantages 3
Warm August helps crops mature 3
Seeding canola in fall or early spring 4
Rat sighting season 4
Alberta 4-H and the Internet 5
Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Wallflowers and cattle market darlings

Feeder cattle prices in Alberta mostly held steady during August after gains in May, June and July.

Canadian beef cattle producers are responding to the downturn in feeder cattle prices and high production costs in a similar fashion to their U.S. counterparts, by culling to reduce the size of their beef herds. July 1 beef cow inventory was down almost four per cent from the July 1995 cyclical inventory peak. Inventory reductions were posted in every major cow-calf province except Manitoba.

"Closeouts for summer grazing programs look very positive, particularly for grass cattle bought during the height of the spring market panic in April," says Ron Gietz, livestock marketing analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With the summer grass drying up, feeder cattle buyers must face the prospect of higher costs of gain this fall and winter. As a result, the local feeder market may once again return to an inverse (premium for heavier cattle) situation."

A record, or near record, barley crop is 'almost in the bin'. Many regions have also reported excellent hay and silage yields, although quality may be variable. Preliminary provincial crop production estimates by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Statistics Canada place the Alberta barley crop at 7.9 million tonnes, up 38 per cent from the five year average. Given a closed border for barley, this level of production is likely to give Alberta cattle feeders a significant cost advantage over their competitors south of the border, providing some support to local feeder cattle prices.

"This fall will probably see poor to average quality calves, weighing 600 lbs and under, be the wallflowers of the fall feeder market," says Gietz. The light calves may pencil out a little better for buyers planning to graze them next summer, following an overwintering program, or in regions with excess forage supplies. These type of calves are expected to trade in the range of 65-85 cents per lb in October and November."

"Crossbred feeders 600 lbs and heavier should be in much stronger demand than the lighter calves. Calves and yearlings capable of average daily gains of three lbs or higher over winter should fetch at least 80 cents per lb, based on a cost of gain of 70 to 75 cents. Quality of cattle will probably be more important than weight within this group. Don't be surprised if the better quality steers trade well over 90 cents."

As in most years, early fall sales of feeder cattle and cull cows are recommended as much as possible. While the outlook is reasonably positive, there are still events that could turn actual prices considerably lower than those forecast. One example is the exchange rate, which so far in 1996 has been very advantageous to Canadian feeder cattle prices, but could easily turn higher.

Contact: *Ron Gietz*
(403)427-5376

Non-traditional crops, 'cumin' or going

Once you get involved in researching exotic new crops, amaranth, quinoa, anise, it's difficult to know if you're 'cumin' or going.

"The names of some of the specialty crops are almost as difficult to master as the marketing infrastructure that's associated with these non-traditional crops," says Kerry Engel, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Some of this biggest questions producers need to know the answers to are who buys it, where are the customers located, when and where do they buy, and what's the market size."

Non-traditional crops, such as herbs and spices, often don't have established markets or visible marketing infrastructure. Marketing exotic crops requires more planning, research and personal commitment.

"Part of the role of Agriculture's business development specialists is helping Albertans with their market research," says Engel. "We help producers avoid common marketing errors such as trying to sell what you grow rather than growing what will sell, putting 'me too' products on the market, and basing decisions on poor market research."

Effective market research should be able to help producers avoid growing a crop that has a limited use or has already saturated a market. Market research should identify existing needs.

"Producers are starting to sit up and take notice of niche markets, those non-traditional crops," adds Engel. "Good market research is the place to start. Personal contact with a buyer or processors is also important to establish a relationship. This contact can be invaluable in receiving feedback on quality."

To get to know a crop, it's limitations as well as its benefits, producers researching new crops often work with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's special crops specialists and the Crop Diversification Centres. Breaking into limited markets can take a long time so plan on a long term commitment and be willing to be patient and persistent.

Cont'd on page 3

"Processing raw crops or seed can be essential to get higher value component products and to access niche markets," says Engel. "It's often prudent to start small and give your operation and your share in the market time to grow. Networking with other producers to share information is beneficial to all involved. It can save you from repeating a mistake made by another producer and can save time and money."

More information on market research and niche markets is available from Alberta's business development specialists. Kerry Engel can be reached in Westlock by dialling the government toll free RITE operator at 310-0000 and asking for 349-4465.

Contact: *Kerry Engel* *Ken Lopetinsky*
(403)349-4465 *(403)674-8217*

Early weaning has its advantages

In most cases, weaning isn't done until the cows are brought in from the main pasture. It's convenient and is easier than making an extra roundup earlier. It also allows producers to maximize the gain on calves on pasture.

"A pretty good case can be made for early weaning, at least during some years," says Terry Holmgren, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When dealing with mid to late fall weaning, producers are selling in the height of the fall calf run. This can cost at least five cents per pound or more compared to selling earlier during the season."

Research has also shown that from mid-August, in many situations, calves gain very little. By this time the cows milk production has dropped and the growth and quality of many pastures is declining rapidly. At this time of year calves need a 10 to 12 per cent protein ration and often grasses are at only five to six per cent.

"Another advantage may be for the cow," adds Holmgren. "Without a calf on her she is likely to go into winter in good condition. Cows in good condition may require 10 to 20 per cent less feed over the winter than cows on the thin side. Weaning early can also extend the fall grazing period and save some winter feeding."

It may not fit the bill in every situation, but early weaning does have definite benefits that shouldn't be overlooked.

Contact: *Terry Holmgren*
(403)645-6301

Warm August helps crops mature

After a cool, wet summer in most of Alberta, a warm, dry August was just what was needed to help crops mature.

"August began with near normal temperatures changing to cooler weather by the end of the first week," says Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist. "Near to above normal temperatures were reported the second week of August. During the third week of August temperatures were 0.5 to three degrees above normal. Temperatures were very warm, four to eight degrees above normal, for the rest of the month."

Provincial average temperature was 1.1 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of 15.8 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported temperatures 0.5 to two degrees above normal.

"Provincial growing degree days for August were about two days ahead in the Peace region and three to five days ahead for all other regions," says Dzikowski. "Despite gains made in August, April 1 to September 1 degree days are three days behind in the southern region, and six to 14 days behind in all other regions."

August is usually the third wettest month of the year. The provincial average precipitation was 9.8 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 54.6 mm. These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"The exception was the southern region where low precipitation totals for June and July continued into August," says Dzikowski. " Lethbridge reported only nine mm of precipitation, 21 per cent of normal. The dry weather caused drought stress in dryland crops."

The wettest regions in Alberta were the northwest and peace regions, where amounts of 30 to 142 mm, or 38 to 190 per cent of normal were reported. Whitecourt reported the greatest precipitation total for August, 141.9 mm or 158 per cent of normal.

Despite the rain, crops had a chance to dry out in August after being stressed by water logged soils in low lying parts of fields in July.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)422-4385

Seeding canola in fall or early spring

There is increasing interest in seeding canola before the growing season starts. New herbicide tolerant *napus* varieties may reduce or eliminate the previous weed control problems for late fall or very early spring seeded crops.

"Seeding just prior to the fall's first heavy snowfall or just as soon as you can get onto the field in spring with these new varieties is being given serious consideration," says Jay Byer, associate oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Advantages of these new varieties include the avoidance of unfavourable weather conditions during flowering with subsequent reduction of flower blast. Fall or early spring seeding also lets the producer spread out the seeding and harvesting period and that increases equipment and manpower efficiencies."

Other advantages to frost seeding herbicide tolerant canola are:

- improved economics of herbicide control of winter annuals and other weeds;
- early maturity reduces the risk of fall frost and resulting grade loss from green seed;
- apparent reduced disease effect on fall seeded canola; and
- possible reduced risk of insect infestations.

"Early seeding dates seem to have the major impact on harvest time," says Byer. "1993-94 testing by Dr. Ken Kirkland saw Argentine canola seeded in the fall of '93 swathed on July 25 and combined on August 5, a full three weeks before the first large fields in the same area were harvested. The early spring seeded crop was put in on April 25, swathed on July 29 and harvested on August 8. The crop spring seeded on May 10, the normal spring seeding time, wasn't swathed until August 8 and combined a full nineteen days later on August 24. Based on this one year's data, yield did not suffer with the earlier maturity date.

If considering fall or early spring seeding:

- consider the slope and aspect of potential fields – you don't want large areas where water stands for long periods of time in the spring that delays early spring seeding or drowns out fall seeded crops;
- consider methods of trapping snow, especially in direct seeding, and particularly in regions prone to chinooks to ensure even soil temperature;
- use a herbicide tolerant variety appropriate for the weed population of the field in question;
- seed as shallow as possible. These plants will start germinating in a very cold soil and will have a harder time than normal plantings to get to the soil surface. Use a regular seeding rate;
- talk to the local seed coating company about protecting fall planted canola seed from late warming spells which may cause germination;
- proceed with caution until more results are obtained. As will all new, untried practices, consider trying a fairly small acreage the first year, whether trying late fall or early spring seeding a herbicide tolerant *napus*.

"Alberta Agriculture oilseed specialists would be very interested in talking to producers who have fall seeded canola, whether successfully or not," adds Byer. "Getting a number of on-farm results will help us plan research programs and advise other interested producers."

"We are planning to put out a few fall/frost seeding test strips this year. Producers interested in trying some fall or frost seeding research should call the Lacombe office at (403)782-4641 by the end of September to get some small acreage test plots set up."

Contact: *Jay Byer or Phil Thomas*
(403)782-4641

Rat sighting season

Late summer and early fall is the 'rat sighting' time of year. It's when many rodent species are naturally on the move and are often mistaken as Norway rats.

"At this time of year, muskrats, pocket gophers, ground squirrels and mice are often mistakenly identified as Norway rats," says John Bourne, vertebrate pest specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The circumstances surrounding the sightings of rodents places heavy suspicion on the Norway rat. A medium sized rodent scurrying down an alley at dusk or a long-tailed, cat-sized animal bearing across an open parking lot are unusual places for rodents of any kind."

People often don't know that young rodents leave their family unit to seek new territory in late summer and early fall. This means that these native, naive creatures wind up in some of the most unusual and often disturbing places.

Young muskrats are often seen at dusk crossing roadways and highways. Juvenile gophers, ground squirrels and muskrats are commonly seen in open garages, ice arenas, lumber yards, vacant lots and even in homes, cottages or parked holiday trailers. At times, unidentifiable rodent remains are discovered at a back door or on the lawn, left there by a domestic pet.

"The biggest reason for mistaken identity is that most Albertans are unfamiliar with Norway rats and don't know what to look for to make a correct identification," says Bourne. "A Norway rat is not a small rodent. Adults can weigh up to one pound and measure over 15 inches in length, which includes an eight inch tail. A juvenile muskrat is almost exactly the same size, shape and weight."

The distinguishing features of a Norway rat, apart from its size, is the cylindrical or rope-like, tapered tail that is nearly as long as the body and is covered with short bristly hairs. A muskrat has a black bare tail, flattened from side to side. Additionally, muskrats have large webbed hind feet adapted for swimming. Norway rats have small delicate front and hind feet.

"Another major feature is the animal's colouring; the underbelly is whitish or buff, while the sides and back are distinctly tan or brownish," adds Bourne. "The hair is short with no undercoat or guard hairs."

Many reports of Norway rats are made based on evidence other than actual sightings, from the tunnelling Norway rats do to the droppings they leave behind. Norway droppings are unique. They are best described as the size and shape of an olive pit (1/2 to 3/4 inch), black in colour and blunt at both ends.

The most important steps to take in reporting a suspicious rodent is to contact the local municipal office or the local Agriculture office as soon as possible. Where applicable, preserve as much evidence (animal remains, droppings) as possible.

Contact: *John Bourne*
(403)853-8225

Alberta 4-H and the Internet

Alberta's 4-H program continues to grow with technology. The Internet is an information and communication tool that 4-H clubs will soon have access to.

"Computers are an important business tool and communication link in the agriculture industry" says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Currently Alberta's 4-H web site has a variety of program information on it. Leaders, members, parents and sponsors can download the program booklet, 4-H council and 4-H foundation news, the new Alberta L.A.W. project manuals, staff contact lists, news releases and the provincial 4-H scholarship application. Sullivan invites net surfers to visit their site. The Alberta 4-H web site can be accessed through the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**. Click on rural development, then on 4-H and your in."

The AGT Alberta 4-H Club Internet contest begins October 1, 1996. Alberta's 4-H leaders and members will have the opportunity to design a club web page and enter it in the contest. As well they will demonstrate their Internet surfing skills by correctly answering a series of skill testing questions.

The first 300 clubs entered will receive three months complimentary access to Internet through AGT's PLAnet service. 4-H clubs accessing Internet through this service must pay a $25 entry fee that will be billed on the user's account. Participating Alberta 4-H clubs will receive complimentary access to Internet from October 1 until December 31, 1996.

This means 50 hours of usage for October and 30 hours each for November and December. Alberta 4-H clubs already accessing Internet can participate in the contest and register by e-mailing their url (Internet jargon for a web page location) to **sulliva@agric.gov.ab.ca**.

Club web pages will be judged on content, visual appeal and technical design (quality of HTML coding, authoring skills, load time).

"In September, each Alberta 4-H club will receive a HTML (web) Authoring manual that will teach them how to create their club web page," says Sullivan. "This manual also contains the contest details, the contest entry form, contest rules and 12 skill testing questions. The answers to the skill testing questions can be found surfing the Alberta 4-H web site, the Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development web site and other interesting 4-H sites."

The winning club will be awarded an Internet ready, Pentium multi-media computer with printer. This grand prize is sponsored by **Viridian Inc.** (formerly Sherritt Inc.).

The AGT Alberta 4-H Internet contest deadline is December 20, 1996. Clubs must download their club web page on to a disk. Then they mail the disk and answers to the skill testing questions to the Home Economics and 4-H Branch at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"We're expecting some creative, high quality club pages," says Sullivan. "The judging team, made up of department technical experts and sponsor representatives, will have a tough job in choosing one winner."

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
(403) 427-4499
sulliva@agric.gov.ab.ca

Agri-News Briefs

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Hogs reach market peak

After consistently outperforming expectations this summer, the slaughter hog market took a downward turn in August, with prices moving below the $2 per kg mark. Hog prices are expected to continue eroding as marketings increase seasonally. Prices are likely to remain relatively attractive and well above year-ago levels, due to a strong U.S. market and a favourable exchange rate. While the peak futures prices are probably over, forward pricing for the December-January period, in particular, is still recommended. For producers who have already wisely pre-priced a portion of their production for the coming year, it may be time to wait out the market before pricing any more of expected 1996-97 production. For further information, contact Ron Gietz, livestock market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)427-5376 in Edmonton.

Farming without subsidies, the New Zealand experience

In 1984, the New Zealand government adopted a 'free market' approach to its economic management. More than 10 years later, a conference is being held at New Zealand's Lincoln University on November 11 – 13, 1996, to present the views of the government and the opinions of leading international agricultural economists and commentators. Along with the three day conference, pre-tours (Nov. 4-10) and post tours(Nov. 14-19) are available. The tours provide a chance to see 'how it is done' in New Zealand and includes stops at the area's top scenic attractions. For further information or for a registration form, contact McAndrews Travel in Edmonton at (403)482-6517.

Predictions in the live cattle futures market right on cue

A sharp jump in North American fed cattle prices in early August was in line with predictions. After moving up to $68.00 per cwt by late August, U.S. fed cattle prices have a high probability of reaching the $70.00 per cwt level by October. U.S. prices at the $70.00 level would translate into Alberta prices in the mid-upper $80.00 range, exceeding the five year average for fall cattle prices. These prices would be a welcome change from low prices experienced earlier this year. Beyond November, the outlook is less rosy, reflecting expectations of larger placements of cattle onto feed in the next few months. Even with the expectation of lower prices in the December-March period, there should be opportunities to hedge or forward price fed cattle in the low to mid $80.00 per cwt range. Look for opportunities to lock in a respectable (eight dollars or less) basis on forward contracts. Otherwise, stick with futures or options for risk management. For further information, contact Ron Gietz, livestock market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)427-5376.

AGRI-NEWS

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CANADIANA

OCT 18 1996

Fall yard care

The sound of geese and the change in leaf colour means fall is here again. Spending some time in the yard now will pay off next year.

"Once frost has killed annuals in the flower bed, they can be pulled," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Crop Diversification Centre South. "Leaving some plants, like alyssum, will protect fallen seeds that will provide colour next year."

The vegetable garden can also be cleaned up. The material from both the flower beds and the garden can be composted, as long as it is disease free. Come late fall, dig over annual flower beds and garden by turning a full spade depth of soil and leave the lumps. Frost action will break down the lumps over the winter, exposing some of the overwintering insects to the elements and improving soil texture. Fall is a good time to add organic matter, animal or mushroom manure or peat moss. Organic matter that sits over winter works in well when the soil is prepared in the spring.

"In the perennial border, the tops of most of the perennials can be cut off or left standing with the exception of peonies, iris and lilies where the tops have to be cut back," adds Barkley. "Removing the tops helps to prevent overwintering of diseases and insects. Leaving this material can help hold a snow cover during the winter as well as being attractive. Newly planted perennials will benefit from a mulch of clean material such as straw or dry grass and leaves mixed together. Stake to mark the plants that need to be moved and divided early in the spring."

The strawberry patch should be mulched when the temperature drops to -7° C and stays there for three or four nights. Water plants well, then mulch with oat straw or grass and leaf mixture. Watering lightly after applying the mulch will help hold it in place. A mulch layer of five cm deep after settling will keep plants safe. Watch for signs of mice during the winter and treat as necessary.

"The wintering of tea roses begins in summer," says Barkley. "Stop fertilizing the plants at the end of July. In August, cut roses with shorter stems. Cut back the water in September, but never let the plants dry out. After several hard frosts, put winter insulation in place. Water plants well, head the canes back to 20-25 cm and put about 30 cm of insulating material, peat moss, compost or soil, around the canes and the crown. Do not pack the material too tightly."

Cutting back the water to woody plants and perennials in August will aid the plants in preparing for winter. It is important to have a reserve of moisture in the root zone for both these groups of plants to prevent root damage during the winter. Fill the soil profile with water in mid-October or just before the ground freezes.

"Early fall is a good time for weed control in the lawn," adds Barkley. "Broad leaf herbicides for lawns applied on a warm

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Fall yard care 1
Research into canola as poultry protein 2
Agriculture tax update seminar 2
Improving calf crop uniformity 3
The pros and cons of fall-applied nitrogen 3
Rats illegal in Alberta 4
Time to take a good look at fields 4
Briefs 5

Alberta
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day will control dandelions, chickweed and clover. Keep mowing the lawn as long as it continues to grow. To prevent winter damage to the crown of the grass, cut the lawn five to seven cm long at the last mowing."

Raking leaves tidies the yard and removes overwintering sites for many insects and diseases. The dried leaves can be stock-piled for next year's compost pile.

"Winter has a way of fading the memories of summer, so make a few notes for next year," says Barkley. "Jot down what worked, what didn't and what you want to try next year."

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-3391

Research into canola as poultry protein

The demand for white meat has increased dramatically in the last 10 years. For poultry producers that means looking at new ways to make gains in breast yield.

"Soybean meal is currently the primary protein source for commercial broiler diets in Alberta," says Martin Zuidhof, poultry specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Soybean is not grown locally and that gives regions where it is grown a competitive advantage. A two-year project to investigate the potential for higher levels of locally grown canola as a protein source in broiler diets started in May this year."

There is evidence that small differences in nutrient composition can result in changes in conformation, greater white meat yield in broilers. However, there is relatively little published research available on how breast yield is affected by nutrition and it's a subject producers are looking for information on.

To determine what effect diets high in canola meal have on carcass conformation and on the sensory quality of broiler meat, two primary grain sources, wheat and barley; three levels of canola meal; and two levels of exogenous enzyme addition will be used.

The control diet will use soybean meal as the primary protein source, the test diets will be formulated with 10 and 20 per cent canola meal, with the balance of required protein being soybean meal. Both barley and wheat based diets will be tested.

"Individual body weights, group body weights, variability in body weights, growth rates, and feed conversion efficiency will all be monitored," adds Zuidhof. "As well as the overall conformation information being gathered, this project will determine the relative breast yield usable for portion-controlled breast meat products.

"Along with the physical conformation of the birds, the project will measure sensory quality of the meat. A trained taste panel will be used to determine the influence of diet on sensory quality. Evaluation of both light and dark meat for odour, flavour, juiciness, tenderness and overall acceptability will be judged."

It is too early to make any generalizations or recommendations from the results received so far. A full report and the findings will be made available on this project in the summer of 1997.

Producers can get on-going results as they are made available on the Internet at:
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestck/poultry/index.html

Contact: Martin Zuidhof
(403)427-4608
zuidhof@agric.gov.ab.ca

Agriculture tax update seminar

The 16th annual Agriculture Tax Update for Professionals seminar, for accountants and lawyers is scheduled for six Alberta locations between October 23 and October 30, 1996. The seminar is coordinated by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, in association with Rural Education Development Association (REDA).

"The annual agriculture tax update seminar is very popular," says Merle Good, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm business management branch in Olds. "The seminar agenda this year focuses on the planning and taxation issues in transferring the family farm between generations, specific taxation issues in the matrimonial property area and an update on agricultural programs, policy and industry direction."

The program will also include specific income tax issues and concerns facing farm clients. A *tips and traps* section, including current cases, letters and Revenue Canada interpretations, will be featured again this year.

"Philip Renaud, a lawyer and partner with Duncan and Craig in Edmonton specializing in estate planning, is speaking at this year's seminar," adds Good. "Renaud has been actively involved in the agricultural area throughout his career and has numerous farm clients who rely on his expertise."

Dereka Thibault, a tax partner with KPMG Peat Marwik Thorne in Edmonton, is also a featured speaker. Thibault specializes in the areas of estate and business succession planning, tax planning for owners, managers and corporate reorganizations.

Scheduling for the seminars is:

Lethbridge – October 23
Calgary – October 24
Lloydminster – October 25
Grande Prairie – October 28
Edmonton – October 29
Red Deer – October 30

Registration is $170 before October 7 and $195 (GST included) after that date. The fee includes lunch, coffee breaks, and a binder of related materials.

Cont'd on page 3

For further information on the seminar, or to register, contact the farm business management branch in Olds at (403)556-4240, toll free by dialing 310-0000 and connecting to the RITE system, or REDA in Edmonton at (403)451-5959.

Contact: *Merle Good*
(403)556-4237

Improving calf crop uniformity

You don't have to sit at ringside in the fall for very long to see the value of calf crop uniformity. Singles or splits cost a great deal of money. Managing and marketing cattle or beef products that are variable is inefficient and difficult.

"Problems with uniformity show up in all sectors of the beef industry and really make themselves known when feeding and marketing a pen of cattle," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As far as the feed ration is concerned, the best you can do is feed to the average. This is difficult when a large variance exists in the cattle. Marketing these cattle also becomes a huge challenge."

There are ways to improve the uniformity of the calves weaned. These include:

- choose a breeding program designed to promote frame size, muscling and colour uniformity. Have a focus and avoid the 'flavour of the month' bull buyer's club. This is one of the quickest ways to improve uniformity;
- sort cows into breeding groups that allow the use of specific bulls on certain cows to improve overall calf crop uniformity (ie: colour, frame, size, etc). The number of groups required will decrease over time as cow herd uniformity improves;
- cull the cows that don't fit your program's frame size. The current market situation may provide the ideal time for this;
- reduce the length of your calving season. This will greatly reduce variability at weaning; and
- consider creep feeding calves that are from older/cull cows or first calf heifers. These are usually the poorer preforming calves.

"These are just a few ideas to promote uniformity in the calf crop," says Koberstein. "Uniform calves will feed and sell better, making them more profitable."

As far as consistency is concerned, all sectors have a part to play, but the cow-calf operator is solely responsible for the genetic potential of all the cattle. The breeding program sets the stage for the quality of cattle being produced.

"As a cow-calf operator it is often difficult to obtain performance or carcass data on calves that were sold as weaned or background cattle," says Koberstein. "Make it a priority to follow your cattle through to the greatest extent possible. This will provide excellent feedback for the breeding program and overall operation management. It may also increase your leverage when marketing cattle with a track record."

Improved predictability, uniformity and consistency is a goal worth working toward.

Contact: *Brian Koberstein*
(403)361-1240

The pros and cons of fall-applied nitrogen fertilizer

When making the decision of fall versus spring nitrogen (N) fertilizer applications, several factors must be considered. Fall fertilization can range from very effective to disastrous depending on soil moisture, the form of nitrogen used and how it is applied.

"There are some general rules for application methods and timing," says Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Generally, spring banded is the most effective method of application and fall broadcast the least. However, fall banded nitrogen can be as effective as spring banded, if there is no extended period of saturated soil conditions in the spring. Fall banded may be more effective than spring banded when a lack of seedbed moisture is a concern.

"The risk of over winter nitrogen loss is highest in regions with moister climates, such as west central Alberta," says McKenzie. "There is less risk in regions that tend to be drier, like south eastern Alberta. Even in these regions, nitrogen losses can be high during a wet spring. Normally, nitrogen losses through denitrification in the drier regions are relatively small and fall banded N is equal to spring banded N. In cases where spring banding causes a significant loss of seedbed moisture, fall banding can be superior."

With this in mind, before fertilizing this fall consider these agronomic factors:

- if soils tend to be saturated with water for extended periods in the spring, fall fertilizer application is probably not a good option;
- soil test to determine the optimum rates of fertilizer required;
- apply a conservative rate of nitrogen fertilizer. An application of 75 per cent of soil test recommendation is a hedge against both high soil test N levels, poor spring soil moisture or low crop prices;
- select a fertilizer formulation that is right for your conditions;

Cont'd on page 4

- avoid the use of the nitrate containing products such as 34-0-0 and 28-0-0 on soils that tend to be saturated in the spring;
- apply N in late fall after the soil temperature has dropped below 7° C and the nitrification process has slowed down; and
- band don't broadcast.

"In summary, fall fertilization can improve time management and allow earlier planting," adds McKenzie. "Producers often find that fertilizer prices and payment schedules are more favourable and the availability of product is often better in the fall. Drier soil conditions in the fall can also mean that application equipment is less likely to cause soil compaction."

To make an informed decision whether or not to fertilize this fall, producers can discuss their specific situation with their fertilizer dealer, fertilizer industry agronomist and their nearest Alberta Agriculture crop specialist.

Contact: Ross McKenzie
(403)381-5126

Rats illegal in Alberta

Concerned Albertans and an effective rat control zone along the Alberta-Saskatchewan border have kept Alberta Norway rat free for over 45 years. Appropriate provincial laws are also in place to make sure that Norway rats do not make Alberta their home.

"The Agriculture Pests Act forbids anyone from owning or keeping live Norway rats in the province," says John Bourne, vertebrate pest specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The Act also states that Albertans must take active measures to prevent rats from becoming established here."

The definition of the Norway rat in the Act includes the brown, wild *Rattus* variety and any derivation of the Norway rat. This includes white or lab rats, often called mollies and 'pet' rats often sold as multi-coloured or pinto rats.

"It is illegal to sell, trade or keep any of these types or variations of Norway rats except under special authorization by the government," says Bourne. "Agriculture, Food and Rural Development may grant a special permit to medical or other research institutes only to possess Norway rats to be used solely for research purposes."

Pet stores and other vendors outside the province commonly sell Norway rats as pets. Rats are not considered pets in Alberta and are strictly forbidden. Illegal possession of Norway rats in Alberta may result in heavy fines of up to $5000. For further information, contact your local Agriculture office.

Contact: John Bourne
(403)853-8225

Time to take a good look at fields

Once swathing is underway, problems that have been developing in the field for some time are easier to see. Many situations are not obvious until you take a close look in a field. Others aren't visible until the stress of filling the seed brings out the signs in other parts of the plant. That makes swathing a good time to make notes on what to watch out for next year.

"Something that is present in most cereal fields is leaf disease," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Tan spot and septoria in wheat and net blotch and scald of barley are most common. A few spots or lesions on the lower leaves won't significantly affect yield. If leaf disease is advanced to the flag leaf, it will affect the amount of yield at harvest.

"A fungicide application may have been a good investment on many crops this year. That doesn't mean it will be next year though. Know what disease is in a field and choose a resistant variety or species to grow next year. Know what to look for so that the fungicide decision can be made next year."

Take-all root rot is common in wheat fields this year. In many cases the weather was a dominant factor in allowing the disease to progress. Crop rotation and seed treatment are important management tools that can be used to combat this disease.

"When you see take-all, the possibility of copper deficiency always pops up," adds Hockridge. "Although the disease does occur in fields without deficiency, it is very common in fields with this nutrition problem. Look for increased lodging, more head melanosis, more empty heads and patches of ineffective weed control. A soil sample is useful in confirming nutrient problems but composite samples have limitations when it comes to micronutrients. Note problem areas and soil sample these separate from the rest of the field."

Harvest time notes can be useful in weed control, too. There has been an increase in herbicide resistant weed populations for several years now. These usually start in small patches and quickly spread over the field when competition from other weeds is reduced. To get a jump on recognizing a developing resistance problem, note weed patterns and how they develop over the years.

"When it comes swathing time, there is a temptation to look at the job as being nearly over," says Hockridge. "It may be a good idea to look at this time as the first part of managing for next year's crop."

Contact: Ron Hockridge
(403)361-1240

Agri-News Briefs

Current lamb prices very attractive

Lamb prices in Alberta have been climbing since 1991. Even with the recent price decline, current lamb prices ($230 per cwt for railgrade this month) are still very attractive, compared to the previous five year average of $158 per cwt. Producers considering expanding production are advised to study the supply/demand situation in both Canada and the United States. A cost/return analysis in both short and long terms may help producers make rational production decisions. Slaughter lamb price in Alberta should stay at the $100 to $110 per cwt range in the near future. Seasonal supply and a weak demand in the U.S. are considered negative factors affecting lamb prices. However, the low July 1 inventories for both Canada and Alberta reported by Statistics Canada should provide some support to the lamb market. Current lamb prices offer very attractive returns to producers. Alberta producers should keep in close contact with various buyers to take advantage of current and future market opportunities. For further information, contact Chuanliang Su, research assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-2887.

Newest weed threat

Scentless chamomile is a daisy-like weed that is well adapted to reduced tillage operations. Many producers aren't familiar with this weed, its growth habit, competitive ability, and the control measures needed to halt its spread. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research centres are studying it and developing management strategies for its control. Scentless chamomile can grow as an annual, winter annual, biennial or a short lived perennial. It reproduces and spreads by seed. A single plant can produce from 71,000 to 256,000 seeds. Emergence occurs within six to 15 days of planting. Priority must be given to controlling early emerging scentless chamomile to prevent seed production and to reduce crop losses from competition. Relying on a single strategy to control this weed probably won't work. Combining cultural and chemical methods for managing scentless chamomile seems to be necessary. For further information, contact Kent MacDonald, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)632-5400.

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AGRI-NEWS

September 30, 1996

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Alberta success in U.S. markets

Exports of several high value, processed agri-food products have grown substantially in the last five years. Exports totalling $319.7 million in 1991 increased to $805 million in 1995. Growth in the value-added, processed goods market is encouraging for Alberta producers and processors.

"From processed meats, honey, perogies, antipasto, canola oil to whiskey, Alberta products are making the move into the U.S. market," says Dave Rous, senior trade director with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Introduction of new products can be the factor that links Alberta producers with U.S. buyers and turns dreams of export success into reality. Alberta Agriculture has been working with the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) on a team marketing effort for the last several years and organizing mini-trade shows."

The potential for exporting Alberta food and beverages into the U.S. and Mexico has grown considerably with the freer climate made possible through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and many Alberta companies are taking advantage of the opportunities.

"Our company is just starting to get into the U.S. and the trade shows put us in touch with buyers which is essential," says Don Stenson, president of *Something Special*. "It doesn't happen over night. It takes time and many give up before the real thing happens.

"The greatest hurdle we had to overcome was labelling compliance. Once we got our label through, everything started to move and then we were in a position to go after customers. There is no sense going to the market until you have your Federal Canning Establishment (FCE) number. Government assistance in this area, to tell processors if their label complies with U.S. requirements and streamline the whole process, is helpful."

Antipasto makes up 60 per cent of *Something Special's* export sales to the U.S. In the last year the company saw 50 per cent growth in this market. Things look good for *Something Special*, they just broke into the New York market and their products can now be found from Florida right up the east coast.

"The U.S. market is very large which makes it attractive and it is also close and easy to ship to," says Steve Bank, president of *Sunora Foods Ltd*. "The toughest thing is to get customers. The mini-trade shows helped in this area. The key thing in any market is getting customers there. You have to have a product they want to buy. It starts and stops with your customers."

Sunora Foods Ltd. has been exporting to the U.S. for almost seven years. Their product can be found in 40 of the 48 lower, mainland states. Growth in this market has been steady at over 10 per cent each year. The company is looking at growth in excess of 10 per cent again this fiscal.

"NAFTA ensured that our products would be competitive," says Joe Makowecki, executive vice-president of *Heritage Foods*.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Alberta success in U.S. markets	1
Global market focus means farm profits	2
Frost and nitrates	3
Woodlot policy conference	3
Keep the pressure up	3
Caring for the land and water	4
Briefs	5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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"The status of the U.S. dollar compared to the Canadian dollar gave us additional dollars to use for marketing and made it viable to start looking at the U.S. Once you've got the grocers interested in carrying your product, you need the promotional dollars to get the product off the shelf.

"You have to be able to act like a local distributor. You have to be set up to supply the stores properly. Medium to large brokerages have the people needed, especially in the beginning, to get out and market your product. New products won't likely make money for three to five years and you have to be prepared for that. A strong domestic base is important because that domestic base will be leveraging the export business until it starts to roll."

Heritage Foods, makers of Cheemo$^{\text{Tm}}$ Perogies, has exported to the U.S. for three years and is distributed in 800 stores there. The company has experienced phenomenal growth in its first few years.

"We are always ready and willing to help producers with support and information to assist them into the U.S. market," says Arnold deLeeuw, vice-president of trade and business services with AFPA. "We really value the partnership arrangement with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the producers we work with. The U.S. continues to be a primary foreign market for Alberta producers, especially the Pacific Northwest. Another mini-trade show is being considered for March 1997 in Phoenix.

"Food and Beverage Canada is also one of our partners. They will be running a series of workshops this fall to provide information on various topics to assist companies understand the U.S. marketplace."

Market awareness on both sides of the border is important for Alberta producers and processors. Helping producers understand the market and make good contacts are the main goals of this team marketing effort that focuses on education in the marketplace and on how the U.S. retail distribution system operates.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development recently established an office in Vancouver, Washington, headed by Cliff Wulff, Alberta trade representative. Wulff is now available to assist Alberta companies in the priority pacific northwest market with market intelligence, information, contacts and expert advice on expanding exports.

Contact: Dave Rous (403)427-4249
Arnold deLeeuw (403)444-2272

Global market focus means farm profits

Adopting a market focus means changing the way you look at a market, your own farm, and the role you play as a producer. Historically, farmers have sold what they produced; having a market focus means producing and selling what the market wants.

"Once producers adopt a 'market focus' instead of a 'production focus' new markets open up to them and profit possibilities open up, too," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Farmers are discovering that future success lies in finding and responding to new markets, finding out what customers want or need, then providing that product to them. A course being offered by Alberta Agriculture, *Global Market Focus for Farm Profits*, equips farmers and entrepreneurs with the skills to develop a market focus."

Customers want high-quality, value-added food and other agricultural products. Alberta farmers are responding to those needs by adding more value right at the farm, and doing more of the marketing themselves. In this way, increased profits stay in Alberta, and especially, right there on the farm.

"This is a 10 session course where producers will learn to identify where a new potential agricultural market exists and why," says Engel. "The course also covers how to analyze a market for its needs and determine how to fill those needs with farm products. Those skills will help producers focus on long-term market opportunities and avoid the uncertainties of a fluctuating market."

Course participants work on a project of their choice, bringing a product from field to market. A unique feature of this course is contact with international trade experts and buyers in various parts of the world through teleconference sessions. Concrete, real examples are used for class discussion and participants direct the focus of the course.

"Mr. Mike Leslie of Nakodo Consulting, Calgary, is the course instructor, " says Engel. "Mr. Leslie specializes in market development with agri-food businesses. His experience comes from extensive work in Japan and other countries in the Pacific Rim, as well as in North America."

The first course begins in early November. The course will be held in five locations throughout Alberta. Call your local rural development specialist for more information and to register.

Lynne Nieman, Taber	(403)625-1445
Delin Sheehan-Millang and Jackie Anderson, Olds	(403)556-4220
Marian Williams and Margo Lawrence, Vegreville	(403)679-1210
Kerry Engel, Westlock	(403)349-4465
Murray Davison, Fairview	1-800-449-2105

Contact: Kerry Engel at (403)349-4465

Frost and nitrates

Nitrates and nitrate toxicity makes timing of cutting or grazing forages after a frost a concern for many producers.

"Nitrates are the form in which plants take up nitrogen," says Josie Van Lent, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The nitrates are used by the plant for making protein compounds. When the plant is stressed, as with frost, the process which converts nitrates to proteins is slowed down or stops completely. The result is an accumulation of nitrates in the plant."

At high levels, nitrates, when converted to nitrites, can be toxic to ruminants, cows and other animals that chew their cud. Nitrites accumulate in the blood stream and affect the ability of the haemoglobin to carry oxygen to body tissues.

"Many factors affect the level of nitrates present in a plant after a frost, such as the vegetative stage or growth activity of the forages," says Van Lent. "In annual crops that have been heavily manured, the degree of stress has a direct bearing on the potential for high nitrate levels. Perennial forages don't accumulate nitrate levels to the same extent as annual forages."

In most cases this fall, nitrate accumulation following a frost should be relatively low as plant growth has slowed down due to shorter days and reduced heat. However, a field of annual forage that is quite vegetative in growth, or a field that was heavily manured or fertilized may be at risk.

"When dealing with this type of field, the recommendation would be to harvest for optimum quality and yield," says Van Lent. "After harvest, test for nitrates. The results of the nitrate reading will determine the amount that can be safely fed in a livestock ration. Feeds high in nitrates can be fed to ruminants provided the level of nitrates in the total ration does not exceed 0.5 per cent on a dry basis.

"To graze a standing crop or swath graze, the rule of thumb is to wait seven to 10 days. Nitrates tend to peak in a plant at day three or four following a frost. However, if dealing with a crop that meets the criteria for a high level of nitrates, take a sample for analysis first. Even after seven days there is no guarantee that nitrate levels will dissipate to an acceptable level. Most labs can have results back within 24 to 48 hours."

Different labs use different methods for nitrate analysis and report the data in different ways. Results may be reported as nitrate (NO_3), nitrate nitrogen (NO_3-N) or potassium nitrate (KNO_3). Know which method was used and become familiar with the levels that are regarded as safe or toxic. Call the lab or your local Alberta Agriculture forage or beef specialist for interpretation or for more information.

Contact: Josie Van Lent
(403)853-8101

Woodlot policy conference

In conjunction with Alberta's forest industry companies, conservation organizations and government agencies, the Woodlot Association of Alberta is sponsoring a policy conference on woodlot management. The conference will be held in Edmonton on October 18-19, 1996.

"The management of forest resources in the settled areas of the province is becoming a significant issue," says Byron Grundberg, conference coordinator. "The objective of the conference is to review issues that impact woodlot management in Alberta and discuss options for improving policies to encourage sustainable management."

The Woodlot Association of Alberta is a non-profit organization established by woodlot owners. Its purpose is to promote leadership in sustainable forest management through increased awareness of the inherent social, economic and environmental values of private and public forests.

"The Association is working to develop recommendations to governments, industry and land owners that encourage implementation of sustainable forest-land management systems for the settled area of the province," adds Grundberg.

Discussion papers will be sent to all participants who register before October 4, 1996.

To register or for additional information, contact Byron Grundberg at (403)944-1722 in Edmonton.

Contact: Byron Grundberg
(403)944-1722

Keep the pressure up

A well pump is a small but necessary part of rural operations. It quietly works away without any attention until it suddenly dies sometime in November or December when it's -40 C.

"Probably the biggest enemy of a pump, or any electric motor, is frequent on-off cycling," says Ken Williamson, agriculture engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The simplest mechanical device on the farm, the pressure tank prevents the pump from cycling too often."

A pressure tank is simply a tank that uses trapped compressed air to deliver water to your water distribution system when the pump is off. When the pressure drops below a pre-set pressure level, the pump comes on again and re-pressurizes the tank by refilling it with water and recompressing the trapped air. The bigger the tank and the more air that is trapped in it, the less frequently the pump must come on.

"If the compressed air and water have any contact, the air will slowly become absorbed in the water," says Williamson. "Eventually there will be so little air in the tank that the pump

Cont'd on page 4

has to come on every time a cup of water is used. This is called a 'water logged pressure tank' and is very hard on the pump."

The majority of farm pressure tanks use a floating diaphragm to separate the air and the water. This slows down the air absorption process, but does not stop it. This type of pressure tank usually needs to be recharged with air every six months or so to maintain optimum performance.

To properly recharge a pressure tank:

- shut off the power to the pump;
- open a tap to release the pressure in the distribution system;
- use an air compressor or tire pump to add air to the pressure tank;
- when the tap starts to spurt air, shut the tap off;
- use the air compressor to build up the pressure in the tank until there is about five pounds per square inch (psi) less pressure in the tank than the cut in pressure of the pump. If the pressure switch is set to turn the pump on at 20 psi and off at 40 psi, add 15 psi of air to the tank; then turn the power to the pump back on.

"Some pressure tanks use sealed bladders to prevent water logging," adds Williamson. "These should never need recharging unless the air valve leaks or the bladder breaks. Some older pressure systems are designed to add and release air automatically using air volume controls."

Before winter sets in, do your pump a favour. Check the pressure tank and remember to service it on a regular basis.

Contact: Ken Williamson
(403)340-5324

Caring for the land and water

On October 26, 1996, the Bow River Project and the Cows and Fish partners are holding a one day Cows and Fish workshop at the Western Heritage Centre in Cochrane.

"Participants will have an opportunity to share ideas, solutions and to discuss how good land and water management is already being practised," says Kelly Chambers, Bow River Project manager. "The workshop is directed to industry, agriculture, developers, small acreage holders and recreation enthusiasts. The goal is to create awareness about responsible watershed management and the activities that impact and benefit land and water."

Cows and Fish is a partnership between Alberta Environmental Protection, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Trout Unlimited Canada, Alberta Cattle Commission and Canadian Cattlemen's Association. The project is funded through the Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture program.

"The conservation of the riparian area, or green zone next to rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and springs, is important in maintaining water quality," says Chambers. "The speakers for the workshop will provide expert information on how a watershed functions; keeping creeks, cows and people healthy; and some strategies for grazing and ecosystem management on a large or small scale. Throughout the day, participants will be rolling up their sleeves and getting into some real problem solving by discussing and sharing experiences and ideas."

To register for the workshop, call the Bow River Project at (403)221-8367 or 1-800-494-8360, or fax (403)221-8368.

Contact: Kelly Chambers
(403)221-8367

Agri-News Briefs

Honey production down

Unseasonable weather experienced during July slowed down honey production in many areas of Alberta. When the weather turned for the better in August, it was too late to make any significant difference in the 1996 honey crop. In total, Alberta's honey crop will be down approximately one third from normal production. Prices remain high at about $1.25 per pound, wholesale. For further information, contact Kenn Tuckey, provincial apiculturist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-1789 in Edmonton.

Piecing it all together

The Alberta Quilts Competition and Exhibition is being featured at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum from October 11 to 20, 1996. Quilts that placed first at agri-fairs held throughout the province this summer, will be on display. This year's top award winning quilt will be chosen from among them. The winning quilts from the last six years will also be on display along with 60 vintage quilts from the Glenbow and Red Deer and District museums. A market place will also be set up during the exhibition where quilting supplies and quilted items can be purchased. The Reynolds-Alberta Museum is located in Wetaskiwin. For further information, contact David Dusome at 1-800-661-4726 or (403)361-1351.

Alberta Pork Congress – a change of dates

The 1996 Alberta Pork Congress (APC) will be held on Tuesday, October 15 at the North Hill Inn in Red Deer. Formerly scheduled in September, the date for the Congress was changed to better accommodate producers. The Board of Directors meeting will be from 11:00 a.m. until noon. The annual general meeting will begin at 1:15 p.m. The Congress is an opportunity for producers to provide input and help determine the direction of Alberta's pork industry into the future. New challenges in the economy and the demands of changing marketing procedures face the industry. Pork producers are encouraged to attend. For further information, contact Marjorie Zingle, general manager APC, (403)244-4487 in Calgary or George Croome, president APC, (403)340-3020 in Red Deer.

In search of the 1996 Farmer of the year

Rod Chernos of Airdrie was the 1995 Farmer of the Year. This year, the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is again looking for a full-time farmer who takes exceptional care of their animals. A successful farmer who uses husbandry methods and takes into account both the physical. and psychological well-being of the animals. If you know an Albertan like this, and would like to acknowledge their efforts by nominating them for the Farmer of the Year, nominations must be submitted by Friday, October 4, 1996. For further information, or an nomination form, contact John Janzen, education coordinator for the ASPCA, at (403)447-3600.

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AGRI-NEWS

October 7, 1996

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Deep tillage not always the answer

Soil compaction can be a problem, especially with some irrigated soils. Compacted soils have less space for air and water which usually results in poorer yields. When dealing with compaction, deep tillage may not provide much help.

"Cultivation reduces soil organic matter amounts and quality," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Some organic matter oxidizes faster with tillage. Mixing the soil can reduce the percentage of organic matter by diluting it with the poorer soil from below. The type of organic matter present in a conventionally tilled field does not have as many water stable aggregates as found in soil under native prairie. These aggregates are important for good soil structure."

An Ontario study, concluded that depth of plowing had little lasting effect on soil pore space, especially in wet seasons. The data also showed that within a few weeks, soil worked to a 30 cm depth before seeding was just as compacted as undisturbed soil.

Contrary to common beliefs, reduced or conservation tillage may improve soil pore space and reduce compaction. Reduced tillage is becoming increasingly popular in Alberta because it saves moisture, requires less energy and protects the soil from erosion. There is also greater infiltration of water into large pores under conservation tillage.

"In southern Alberta tillage is still very common," says Frank. "It is used for seedbed preparation and weed control. The high cost of no-till seed drills and, to some extent, the cost of herbicides are a deterrent to conservation or reduced tillage. Each producer should assess their situation to determine their course of action. It is possible to reduced tillage, especially deep tillage, and not increase soil compaction."

Some soils respond differently to reduced tillage than others. Research, however, is bringing questions to bear on some old ideas and practices.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

FBMI launches another round of training and development

In May, 1996, the Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) called for proposals to develop national and multi-provincial tools and information and services for farm management.

"About 76 development and training projects have been approved," says Craig Smith, FBMI representative. "Managing change and management mind set, technology and information transfer, identifying and responding to changing markets for agricultural products, and assessing management needs associated with environmental and societal issues were the

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Deep tillage not always the answer 1

FBMI launches another round of training and development 1

The most dangerous farm implement 2

Growing medium and plant nutrition 2

New marketing simulation courses 3

1996/97 shelterbelt program 3

Russian Far East food buyer visits Alberta 4

Medication and vaccine residue 4

Briefs 5

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four priorities set by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council for this year's training and development."

Some of the projects commenced earlier in the year and others are set to begin in the fall. The fall calendar will contain descriptions of the projects to help farm managers select applicable direct training as well as potential resource tools. The calendar will be available in October and some information will be on the Internet as well.

"There are some valuable learning opportunities and tools stemming from the projects," says Smith. "The quality improves with each year and that benefits Alberta's farm managers."

Additional information on the 1996/97 FBMI projects are available by contacting Nan Bartlett (403)835-4288 in Fairview; Arla Trueblood (403)954-3745 in Jarvie; Craig Smith (403)626-3448 in Glenwood; or the provincial coordinator, Anita Lunden at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Business Management Branch in Olds, at (403)556-4278.

Contact: Craig Smith
(403)626-3448

Anita Lunden
(403)556-4278

The most dangerous farm implement

Auger accidents are a common occurrence. The crop's been cut and taken off and the auger is the last implement used to get the grain into storage.

"Every year during harvest there are incidents of lost fingers, hands, feet, involving augers" says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The saddest part of working in farm safety is that you hear all of the stories of injuries and near misses. Parents often call the office and request that a farm safety specialist speak at a school or to a youth group because caution around farm equipment just can't be stressed enough."

The auger is involved in more hospital visits for the number of hours worked than any other farm implement. The rush to get the crop in the bin has a high cost. A farmer loses his balance and his foot becomes entangled in the spinning guardless auger. A boy driving a tractor with an auger attached hits a powerline and doesn't know what to safely do.

"It's long overdue, but the auger has to be singled out as one dangerous piece of equipment if not operated properly," adds Jones. "Children should never be expected to view the augering of grain without strict adult supervision."

Reduce the risks and hazards related to auger use, take precautions:

- place barriers around the immediate auger area to prevent persons not involved in the operation from entering the area;
- young children should not operate augers and should not enter the area near an auger;
- ensure that protective shields are in place and in good condition before starting an auger;
- shut power off and be sure the power source is locked-out and tagged before servicing or repairing an auger;
- do not wear loose clothing or jewelry and tie back long hair when operating an auger;
- do not stand on or jump over an auger while it's in operation;
- lower grain augers to a horizontal position before moving them from one location to another;
- ensure good footing while working around augers, dry level ground or a gravel pad are ideal. Spilled grain should be removed between loads, after the auger has been turned off;
- never use hands or feet to redirect the flow of grain or other materials into the auger;
- make sure all operators know and follow safe operating procedures; and,
- label augers as posing a hazard for entanglement and serious injury.

Contact: Eric Jones
(403)427-4231

Growing medium and plant nutrition

More than 100 scientists from around the world presented papers on different growing material for plant culture and the effective use of plant nutrients. The symposium was held in Freising, Germany and was organized by the International Society for Horticultural Sciences.

"Research presented at the symposium covered ornamentals, vegetables and nursery crops," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Delegates took advantage of a tour to a large scale composting facility near Munich. The composting was carried out in a covered building and it took 80 days to complete the composting process."

In Germany, there is no more available landfill space, so composting and recycling is taken very seriously. By law, waste is collected as kitchen foods, yard waste, and other categories. One composting facility in Buchenberg handled 18,000 tons of kitchen and yard waste and produced 4000 to 6000 tons of compost that was mixed with peat moss or wood chips and made into plant growing substrates.

"Related research is being conducted at the Faculty of Horticulture, in Freising near Munich," says Mirza. "An investment of approximately 45 million Deutschmark (DM) into this program was made by the country."

Cont'd on page 3

Dr. Mirza's attendance at this conference was sponsored by the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and the Fruits Grower Society of Alberta. Alberta's greenhouse and growers industry support of provincial presence at this symposium is of special significance.

"The German horticulture industry is worth 15 billion DM, employs 300,000 people, and has a yearly investment of approximately one billion DM," says Mirza. "Graveyard horticulture is another area of strong growth. While visiting a substrate (growth material) packing facility, it was pointed out that chimney soot is used to make the growing mix blacker which is preferred for use in graveyards.

"Composting is quickly becoming an alternative in waste management. Much can be learned from countries like Germany, where necessity has accelerated the practice."

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza
(403)422-1789

New marketing simulation courses

The Sim marketing courses have been updated to offer the latest information using a 'learn to do by doing' format.

"For this year's series, we've kept the hands-on challenges and the real world feel that producers have said is beneficial," says Doug Walkey, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Markets change all the time, policies, contracts, prices, weather, nothing stays the same. So each year Agriculture's market specialists fine tune these courses to ensure they are current and provide real value to participants."

The new 'Sim' series has three main components:

FutureSim 3 – this course in futures and hedging has been expanded. The FutureSim teaches broker management, crop delivery issues, hedging, speculation and market orders. It includes option trading, U.S. futures contracts, cash basis contracts, currency risk, cross hedging and 'locking the dollar'. This course is all about reducing price risk in the '90s and the next century.

CattleSim – studies livestock markets, futures, options and cash contracting. Participants will analyse alternatives ranging from selling calves at weaning to U.S. export for slaughter. The course concentrates on targeting markets with specific products, and using the right market tools to meet changing needs.

GrainSim – reworked to reflect the new look in Canadian commodity markets. The course features expanded option contracts, new cash contract specifications, and new delivery points. Strategy development, market timing, selecting specific tools, and analysing the markets will be discussed. This course trains participants to be a marketing manager.

"While the courses are designed with producers in mind, many agribusiness people and lenders have expressed interest," says Walkey. "The Sims provide an opportunity to run a farm for a while, to think as a farmer thinks, to learn about the pressures that agricultural marketers are under."

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offers industry courses once a year. Each Sim is compressed into two or three days.

GrainSim	October 29, 30, 31, 1996 – Calgary
CattleSim	November 5, 6, 7, 1996 – Red Deer
FutureSim	November 13, 14, 1996 – Edmonton

There is limited seating available in some of the courses. For further information or to register, contact Faye Douglas Phillips, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Telephone registration and charge card payment can be made by phoning Jane at (403)427-2171. To be connected toll-free, dial 310-0000.

Contact: Doug Walkey
(403)782-3301

1996/97 shelterbelt program

After 45 years of supplying trees and shrubs for shelterbelts, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is turning the program over to the private sector. These changes will not affect the 1996/97 applications or the 1997 tree delivery.

"Orders for both farmstead shelterbelts and conservation plantings for spring 1997 will continue to be accepted until March 1, 1997," says Brendan Casement, agroforestry program leader with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It's always a good idea to order early to reserve the trees needed while there is still a good supply. All orders will be processed and delivered next spring as they have been in the past."

Order forms can be picked up from local Agriculture offices, the local Agriculture Service Board or PFRA offices. There is an application fee of $25 (plus GST) that covers both sections of the program. There has been no change in prices from last year for farm shelterbelts. Of the 25 varieties of trees and shrubs offered for farmstead shelterbelts, only red elder is unavailable. All other varieties are in good to excellent supply.

"Conservation trees from PFRA are available free of charge through this program and are ordered on the same form as the farmstead trees," says Casement. "Read the instruction page carefully to determine eligibility for 'free' trees. There are 10 varieties of trees and shrubs for field shelterbelts, conservation plantings and wildlife habitat. This conservation tree program is scheduled to remain after privatization."

Cont'd on page 4

Planning for new shelterbelts requires consideration of types of trees, spacing between and within rows, watering and weed control. Weeds, particularly perennials, are usually the biggest cause for failure. One year of site preparation in pasture or hay fields is necessary for success. A weed control program for a least three years following planting is crucial for the development of a good shelterbelt. Mechanical, chemical or the use of mulches are alternatives that should be investigated prior to planting.

"Shelterbelts can be designed so that drifting snow is carried away from buildings and driveways," says Casement. "Trees around farmsteads and buildings are aesthetically appealing, reduce wind speed and can lower heating costs in winter. The area inside the shelterbelt is peaceful and cooler than the surrounding area in summer."

Field shelterbelts help to reduce soil and water erosion and have been proven to increase crop yields. These shelterbelts also provide some shelter and food for wildlife.

Contact: Brendan Casement
(403)422-1789

Russian Far East food buyer visits Alberta

During the first week of September, the Ag-food Network of Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) and Marketing Services Division of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development hosted Mr. Nikolai Pechonkin, president of Northway International Inc.

"Mr. Pechonkin has been buying North American food products from his Seattle office for about four years," says Ed Bristow, senior trade director with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "His Russian company, Golden Ring Inc., Magadan, Russia, has a warehouse and distribution system which handles about 40 containers per month of meats, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, canola oil, margarine and salad dressing for distribution in the Russian Far East."

Alberta food processors provided Mr. Pechonkin with a wide range of products to consider for the Russian Far East market. Alberta products already sourced by Northway International Inc. Include canola oil and margarine and potato granules.

"Alberta's reputation as a reliable supplier of quality food products at reasonable prices was a major reason for Mr. Pechonkin's visit," says Bristow. "He was impressed with the variety and quality of poultry, pork and beef products available in Alberta. Dairy products, including butter, and long shelf-life milk, were of major interest as well."

A considerable amount of time was spent with Edmonton Potato Growers. A cooperation agreement to transfer Alberta potato production storage and packaging to the Russian Far East is under consideration.

"Northway International Inc. is only one of many Russian food companies with offices in Seattle, Washington," adds Bristow. "North America has become a major supplier of foods for the Russian Far East as Russian rail transportation subsidies were eliminated and domestic food production declined over the last five years."

The Russian Far East has close economic ties to Japan, Korea, China and other Pacific Rim countries including Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore. Consequently, business activity in the Russian Far East is less bureaucratic than found in western Russia. Approximately 80 per cent of the foods required in the Russian Far East are imported. There is tremendous opportunity for western Canada, particularly Alberta, to participate in this market.

Contact: Ed Bristow
(403)422-0907

Medication and vaccine residue

All drugs and medications have restrictions that govern withdrawal time, days to slaughter and days to shipping. These guidelines are in place to protect the animals and to ensure that meat for human consumption doesn't contain medication or vaccine residue.

"As a matter of practice, the withdrawal times set for each medication should be checked and followed carefully," says Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "For the first time, an undercover operation in the U.S. has uncovered criminal activity of knowingly selling medicated animals for slaughter for human food. Two cases in July went to court and both cases resulted in guilty verdicts."

The penalty for selling mediated animals for human consumption can be six months in jail and fines of up to $10,000. One of these U.S. cases resulted in six months in jail, 12 months probation and a $2500 fine. Sentencing of the second case is set for next month.

"The implications are similar when dealing with weaning or finishing programs," adds Yurchak. "Selling livestock without the proper withdrawal times from vaccines harms the industry. It is up to each producer to read the medicine labels or consult with their veterinarian to ensure safe and proper use of all medications and vaccines."

Contact: Trevor Yurchak
(403)675-2252

Agri-News Briefs

A busy season for potato growers

Early harvest has gone well for potato growers in the province. From shipments sent to Manitoba and Alberta's potato chip and french fries plants, the early harvest quotas have been met. Growers planted 29,051 acres to potatoes this season, approximately 10 per cent more than last year. Seed potato growers are following up on sales to Mexico. Mexican growers toured Alberta in August with Ray Darwent and Elton Dunk of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's marketing group. This market opened up in February of this year, and an Alberta representative has been in Mexico throughout the growing season, monitoring growth and encouraging additional sales for next season. In the local market, there has been a decrease in the price for table potatoes this season. This is due to the volume coming out of the northwestern U.S. It may be a tougher selling season for Alberta potatoes. For more information, contact Alan Stuart, manager Potato Growers of Alberta, (403)291-2430.

Farm Women's Conference

The 1996 Peace Region Farm Women's Conference will be held on November 14-15, 1996 at the Golden Inn, Grande Prairie. The conference is an excellent opportunity for area farm women to participate in sessions, listen to speakers and liaise with others and share ideas and experiences. Approximately 125 are expected to attend. For further information, contact Donna Skoworodko at (403)864-3597 in Spirit River or 1-800-769-2260.

Western Canadian grazing conference

The Alberta Forage Council, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Olds College are holding the first Western Canadian Grazing Conference on December 10-11, 1996 in Red Deer. The two-day conference is designed for producers who want to improve their pasture production knowledge and techniques. Topics include: pasture for dairy production, watering systems, extending the grazing season with annuals and perennials, backgrounding and finishing cattle on pasture, grazing alfalfa, as well as others. Conference speakers include experienced grass farmers, researchers and forage specialists from the western provinces and the midwest states. A panel of experienced grazers will explain their reasons for farming grass and share some solutions to common and unique problems of grazing tame pastures. There will also be a trade show with 35 pasture-related exhibits. For further information or to register, contact the Alberta Forage Council at (403)443-7544.

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AGRI-NEWS

October 14, 1996

Control for pesky house and stable flies

A province wide survey of parasitic wasps of house flies was initiated early this summer. The study is part of ongoing research for biological control agents of livestock pests conducted by Dr. Ali Khan, livestock entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Dr. Gary Gibson, taxonomist with E.C.O.S. Research Centre in Ottawa, is assisting with the identification work.

"Stable flies and house flies are major pests of feedlot and dairy cattle in Canada," says Khan. "Stable flies feed on the blood of cattle. Their painful bites stress animals causing reductions in weight gain in feeder animals and reductions in milk flow in dairy cattle. House flies cause indirect losses. They spread disease, are troublesome in livestock facilities and irritate employees."

In the study, 10 feedlots from Airdrie in the south to Athabasca in the north were surveyed by Agriculture beef specialists. Beef specialists also assisted Dr. Kevin Floate in the Lethbridge region.

"The interesting and exciting part of the study is the wide spread occurrence of parasitic wasps in all five regions of Alberta," says Khan. "There could be more than three species of parasitic wasps of house flies present in cattle feedlots."

The presence of natural enemies of house flies that can overwinter in cold Alberta conditions means these parasites have a better chance of recycling and sustaining. These species have an advantage over California and Arizona species commercially available.

"Parasitic wasps are natural enemies of stable and house flies," says Khan. "Female wasps lay eggs in fly pupae. Eggs hatch and the wasp larvae eat the developing fly. Upon becoming adults, wasps emerge from the fly pupae to parasitize other fly pupae. These parasitic wasps are only 2 mm long and feed only on a select group of flies and are not harmful to people, plants or animals."

The potential for parasitic wasps to significantly reduce numbers of pest flies in Alberta's livestock facilities has not yet been realized. Studies in the U.S. indicate natural rates of parasitism for fly pupae can range from five per cent up to and exceeding 50 per cent. This is the first extensive study being done in Canada. An earlier, limited study conducted in dairy farms confirms the presence of parasitise of house flies. This new study shows promise for developing effective biological control agents native to Alberta.

Contact: *Dr. Ali Khan*
(403)427-5083

This Week

Control for pesky house and stable flies 1

Focus on a global market 2

PMU ranching adopts additional health standards 2

Wintering strategies for beef cows 2

Field pea straw – a valuable resource 3

Farmfair '96 an international event 3

Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Focus on a global market

Farmers are discovering that their future success lies in finding and responding to new markets that call for value-added agricultural products.

"Historically, prairie agriculture has relied heavily upon the export of raw commodities for our trade success," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Recent growth in exports around the world has not come from export of raw commodities, but with value-added food and agricultural products."

To keep some of this growth and the potential profits in the value-added sector on the farm, farmers are finding they must adopt a 'market focus' when planning production. They are changing the way they look at the market, their farm and the role they play in supplying the market. More value added right on the farm and more of the marketing done by the producer of the product are the trend for the future. It is increasingly important to keep the value-added margins, profits and jobs down on the family farm.

"To help farmers and producers face the changing market challenge, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is offering a course that will focus on the skills required to get and use a market focus," says Engel. "A market focus is the study of the consumers' needs and wants, then producing, growing or making products that fit those needs."

The course will be held in Taber and Olds in November, 1996; in Vegreville and Westlock in January, 1997; and in Fairview in March, 1997.

"Candidates for this course are farmers, business people or entrepreneurs with an interest in managing more of their own marketing, whether in grain, livestock or value-added products," adds Engel. "Long-term benefits of taking this course include being less affected by fluctuating markets, being able to focus on long-term market opportunities working co-operatively with other producers, firms and processors and being able to access major markets."

Anyone interested in adding value or developing special crops or alternative livestock to fit specific niche markets will find this course especially beneficial.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(403)349-4465

PMU ranching adopts additional health standards

An enhanced veterinary supervision and visitation program has been implemented by Ayerst Organics, the company that contracts with equine ranchers for pregnant mares' urine (PMU). A minimum of three veterinary reviews of each herd during collection, a required part of the company's new herd health program, are timed for early, mid and late season.

"The PMU industry has always operated under a strict code of practice governing the lighting, ventilation and general conditions the mares are stabled under," says Les Burwash, equine specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Additional vet checks to determine the overall health of the herd is another step this industry is taking to ensure the mares are well cared for and to help eliminate some recent public concern about PMU operations."

With each visit, veterinarians will complete a three page form describing the medical condition and history of the mares, the state of the barns, the feeding and watering practices (usually free consumption of both hay and water) and the condition of other horses kept on the ranch.

As well as these required vet checks, each ranch is visited monthly by company inspectors who file extensive reports to the company.

"Horse ranches where PMU is collected are family owned and operated farms," says Burwash. "They are contracted independently with Ayerst Organics, a leading pharmaceutical company out of Brandon, Manitoba."

To represent the 482 ranchers in Canada and in North Dakota, of which 66 Albertan, a not-for-profit association, the North American Equine Ranching Information Council (NAERIC) was formed. NAERIC is an educational association established to provide accurate information on PMU ranchers and the ranching practices they use in the management of their horses.

PMU provides the hormones used to produce a leading estrogen replacement therapy medication called Premarin ™, prescribed for over 8 million women in 84 countries around the world. The hormones in PMU are also undergoing preliminary research for their effectiveness in relieving symptoms of illnesses such as Alzheimer.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Norman Luba
Executive Director, NAERIC
(502)245-0425,
Louisville, Kentucky

Wintering strategies for beef cows

Feed and bedding makes up the largest per cent of the cost of weaninging a calf. In some regions in the province this cost can be up to 43 per cent of the total.

"When considering the cost for feed and bedding, it certainly emphasises the importance of paying close attention to feeding programs," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Thinking about and evaluating the feeding period ahead can help producers

Cont'd on page 3

evaluate the needs of their herd and plan more efficiently. To do this it is beneficial to break feeding programs down into three areas of focus: ration formulation, ration delivery, and health and environmental control."

Ration formulation involves evaluating available feedstuffs and providing the nutrients required to maintain the type of condition and performance expected. Meeting the needs as closely as possible is important in keeping costs down. Both overfeeding and underfeeding have a negative effect on the bottom line.

Ration delivery is a straightforward concept. The cost of delivery and of feed waste can have a huge impact on overall feed costs. The amount of waste with various systems varies significantly, from close to zero to as high as 25 per cent. Convenience and available facilities are factors that play a significant role in ration delivery alternatives.

The cost of maintaining a beef cow with a high parasite load or poor health status means a higher feed bill. Lost performance and increased veterinarian bills aside, health of the cow herd is significant in keeping costs down.

Environmental management is simply limiting adverse environmental conditions like wind and cold, as much as possible. Providing shelter from winds can mean significant savings, considering a wind of 15 kmph at -25° C will increase energy requirements by 22 per cent.

"When evaluating the coming feeding period, each operation must look at its own circumstances, type of cattle, facilities, labour, cash flow, and make decisions based on the situation at hand," says Koberstein. "The importance of the bottom line is the one common factor in all beef production operations. Evaluating and refining winter feeding programs can improve those bottom line results."

Contact: Brian Koberstein
(403)361-1240

Field pea straw – a valuable resource

In the fall of 1995, 117 straw samples were collected and analysed from the four On Farm Demonstration variety trials conducted in south central Alberta. Each sample was a composite of grab samples taken randomly throughout each of the plots.

"Very little data on the nutrient composition of field pea straw has been available to help producers choose between working the straw into the soil, baling it and feeding it to cattle or selling it as feed," says Mark Olson, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "While the results of the 1995 tests are preliminary, they can provide farmers with some information to use when making the decision to bale or not."

Nutritionists have always believed that the nutrient value of field peas straw as a feed was equivalent to cereal straw. Cereal straw ranges between four and six per cent protein and has an acid detergent fibre (ADF) of 47 - 49 per cent. ADF is a measure of digestibility or fibre and the lower the ADF, the better the digestibility. Good quality alfalfa would measure in the 30 per cent range for ADF.

Average protein measured in the 1995 field pea straw samples was 12.5 per cent, the equivalent of good hay. The ADF or fibre was 50.5 per cent, similar to slightly poorer than cereal straw.

"Removing field pea straw rather than working it back into the soil has been considered taboo by some experts," says Olson. "The straw contains nutrients that could potentially be used by following crops. It was believed that the cost of replacing these nutrients exceeded the amount of revenue received for the straw."

The total cost of nutrients removed by baling field pea straw varies from $9.25/acre if removing 1000 lb/acre of straw, up to $23.84/acre if removing 2500 lb/acre of straw. To pay for loss of nutrients, producers would need to receive $21/tonne for the field pea straw. In addition to the value of the nutrients in the straw, the cost of baling must be included in the equation. Farmers baling the straw, feeding it to their own cattle and returning the manure back onto the field won't have as large a cost in terms of nutrients removed.

"No matter how you look at it, field pea straw has substantial value," adds Olson. Whether it is baled and fed on farm, baled and sold or worked back in, it is a valuable resource and should be recognized as such."

A full variety by variety analysis is planned for both the 1995 fall samples and for samples being collected in fall 1996. Results of this analysis will be made available as soon as it is completed.

Contact: Mark Olson
(403)556-4220

Farmfair 1996 an international event

Farmfair International '96, November 2 through 10, 1996, produced by Northlands Park in Edmonton is expected to attract more than 1,500 purebred beef cattle for show and sale. Cattle buyers from across Canada and a dozen different countries will be in attendance.

"Alberta is well known worldwide for its quality livestock," says Roxanne Carr, agriculture manager for Northlands Park. "Delegations from Zimbabwe, Japan, China and Ireland have already expressed their interest in coming to Edmonton to buy what they term as the finest purebred livestock in the world."

Cont'd on page 4

Farmfair '96 will showcase nearly 20 breeds of cattle including this year's feature breed, the Simmental. Canada's largest Black Angus show will offer $75,000 in cash and prizes. Other featured events include: the 1996 Canadian National Gelbvieh show and sale; the National Red Angus show; the 25th annual Limousin sale; and the Alberta Angus Superstar sale.

"A new feature at this year's event is *The Stock Exchange*, a showcase of several up and coming livestock breeds," adds Carr. "Regional representatives on animal health will have their first national meeting at Farmfair this fall. Farmfair is seen as a respected venue to showcase leading-edge agriculture technology. It just gets bigger each year."

Small livestock shows and sales round out the special attractions included in the '96 lineup. The first weekend, November 2 & 3, is dedicated to sheep, swine, llamas, alpacas, the first-ever Goat Gala, and Canada's largest poultry, pigeon and rabbit show.

Horsemanship seminars and clinics, Warmblood and Quarter horse shows and sales, team cattle penning and draft horse pulling competitions and other family oriented entertainment are offered at this year's Farmfair.

As every year, Farmfair takes place in conjunction with the Canadian Finals Rodeo (November 6-10). For more information on Farmfair International '96, please call (403)471-7369.

Contact: Roxanne Carr at (403)471-7136

Agri-News Briefs

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Zero tillage in Western Australia

On Wednesday, November 27 a seminar entitled Zero Tillage - development in Western Australia, is being held at the University of Alberta, by Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Sciences. The seminar, jointly sponsored by the University of Alberta and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agronomy Unit, is scheduled to begin at 3:30 p.m. in room 318J, AgFor. Mr. Bill Crabtree of Esperance, Western Australia is the key speaker at the seminar. For more information, contact Linda Hall at (403)427-7098.

Soil Conservation Awards

The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACT) is calling for nominations to recognize outstanding commitment and dedication to the preservation of Alberta soil. Nominations of a farm family, a producer group or an industry leader will be accepted by all ACTS directors or at the ACTS office until October 31, 1996. Winners will be invited to an expense paid trip to the 1997 Agri-Future Farm Technology Expo and Conservation Workshop, where the presentations will be made. This award is sponsored by Adviser Graphics, Monsanto Canada, Toronto Dominion Bank and the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA). For more information or nomination forms, contact Russ Evans at the ACTS office, 1-800-251-6846.

Two new Ag-Ventures

If you've ever considered growing Saskatoon berries commercially or starting a greenhouse bedding plant business, there are two new Ag-Venture business profiles that will be of interest. The Ag-Venture profiles are in-depth and cover many aspects of business, from specific industry highlights and market basics to production and economic basics. The *Commercial Saskatoon Berry Industry* Ag-Venture profile is Agdex 238/830-1 and the *Greenhouse Bedding Plant Production and Marketing* Ag-Venture profile is Agdex 281/830-1. They can be ordered through the publications office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Grazing calves in late fall

A pasture tour, sponsored by the Western Forage/Beef Group of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is being held on Wednesday, October 30, 1996. The tour starts at 1:00 p.m. and will cover backgrounding calves on Italian ryegrass. An electric fencing demonstration will be included during the tour. Discussions on winter swath grazing, fall grazing options, reducing weaning stress, and points on winter nutrition will also take place. The tour will go rain or shine. Anyone interested should meet on the south side of the Administration building at the Lacombe Research Centre in Lacombe. For further information, contact Bob Nelson, chair of the Western Forage/ Beef Group, at (403)782-8030.

AGRI-NEWS

October 21, 1996

Wheat watch

World wheat production will be up about eight per cent over last year due to increases in many areas of the world: most notably Canada, the European Union, Russia, Argentina, China and Australia. The five main exporters are expected to increase production by 13 per cent over last year, the highest level in over five years.

"World stocks are expected to increase by 12 per cent, providing lots of competition for the export market," says Brenda Brindle, market analyst with KenAgra Management. "In Canada, in addition to increased production, Statistics Canada reported carry over of more wheat than the previous year, further adding to supplies. The CWB challenge will be to move a large crop in a year of ample world competition and prospects of lower world trade." Movement of export wheat could be slow with congestion in Vancouver into late fall. High quality wheats will remain in demand among world markets, but lower qualities will need to compete with increased wheat and coarse grain supplies. Expect higher carry-outs next summer as the system cannot forward this size of crop.

"Wheat prices slipped during September, dropping another $20.00 per tonne on world markets since late August," says Brindle. "U.S. futures, Canadian futures, and country buying prices reflected this continued drop in value. Canadian export wheat values are likely to end up at levels below last year, closer to values in 1994/95."

"Producers should watch the Pool Return Outlook (PRO) values at their elevator. Values posted are at the port and need to be adjusted to location. Important for the outlook later in the year is the progress of world winter wheat crops. The trend of U.S. wheat futures will provide some guide to the direction of PRO values."

Contact: Brenda Brindle
(403)468-4442

Weaning May born calves

It's that time of the season when weaning spring calves begins. Producers can keep a few things in mind to make it as easy as possible on calves, cows and themselves.

"By November 1, calves born May 1 are 180 days old, and those born June 15 are 135 days old," says Trevor Jones, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Cows peak milk production is about 90 days after calving. The conversion of feed to milk after that point starts becoming less efficient. Calves as young as 135 days of age might as well be weaned."

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Wheat watch 1
Weaning May born calves 1
Stored grain problems 2
Toxins and mouldy grain 2
Hemp growth and fibre evaluation 3
Oilseed outlook 3
Diversification at a glance 3
Video six-packs 4
Briefs 5

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To ensure smooth transition in weaning, it is important to have the calves eating the feed that will be fed once weaning is complete.

"Good quality mixed grass legume hay and two to three pounds of a balanced barley-soy meal ration will get calves weaned with a minimum of growth loss," adds Jones. "More shelter will be needed than usually provided to older calves. This provision allows the calves to use feed to greater efficiency."

An ionophore and implant can be used for steers and cull heifers. Omit the implant for any replacement heifers.

Contact: Trevor Jones at (403)835-2241

Stored grain problems

Much of Alberta has been receiving wet weather in the last few weeks. It is a strong reminder that crops are not always put into storage in good condition.

Many decisions need to be made concerning damp or tough grain and the time it comes off. Two main problems can arise from a less than optimum decision: storage insects are more prevalent and multiply more quickly in moist grain, and microbial activity in grain that isn't dry causes it to heat.

"The insect problem is something that can be influenced before grain goes into storage," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Spilled grain around granaries are good breeding sites for insects. This spilled grain should be cleaned up and disposed of. After completing necessary repairs and weather proofing, a good granary cleanup should be done. Be sure to dispose of the sweepings. Spraying granaries with a weak Malathion solution will kill insects hiding in corners."

The grain heating problem is more complex. Grain moisture content, outside air temperatures and the time of year are all factors in harvesting decisions. Bin aeration, although it has limitations, is useful in keeping moisture and temperature uniform throughout the grain and it can lower moisture content under the right circumstances. Grain dryers are useful, but many producers don't have the opportunity to use them because of the expense.

Traditionally, a lot of combining is done in October," says Hockridge. "It's hard to be patient when the whole year's income is laying in the field. While it's best not to panic and start taking grain off too wet, by the third week of October it may be time to take it off. The cooler temperatures may help preserve it."

After grain is in the bin, it should be monitored regularly. Take action if problems start to develop as the presence of insects in grain can cause grade loss or rejection at the delivery point. Preserve your quality by monitoring the situation closely.

Contact: Ron Hockridge at (403)361-1240

Toxins and mouldy grain

With the wet harvest conditions throughout much of Alberta this fall, there will be some mouldy grain used as feed.

"Past studies of mouldy cereal grains from Alberta have identified moulds from aspergillus, penicillium and fusarium species," says Sam Jaikaran, swine nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "All these moulds are capable of producing extremely powerful toxins that could debilitate or kill livestock and poultry."

It is possible, even in heavily moulded samples, to find no toxins present. To produce toxins, high temperatures and high humidity are needed in combination with high moisture levels in grain. We are fortunate in Alberta because even when enough moisture is present, prolonged high temperatures do not usually occur during fall harvest weather.

"It is important that producers not get lulled into a false sense of security as the possibility still exists for isolated incidences of toxins to appear," says Jaikaran. "For example, toxins have been found in mixed feed which was made from damp grain and which was stored in a bin inside a warm barn. In addition, ergot has been an ongoing concern, particularly in a damp year like 1996."

Ingestion of toxins has different effects on different species of livestock. Generally the symptoms include: lowered feed intake, reduced immunity, lower weight gains, impaired kidney function, abortions, lower milk and egg production and increased mortality.

Feeding mouldy grains without toxins results in lower feed intake due to decreased palatability. Mouldy grains are lower in energy, protein and vitamins because the moulds extract these nutrients in order to grow. Adding vitamins or antioxidants to feed with mouldy grain has little or no effect on improving the feed value.

"As a general rule, mouldy grain should never be fed to poultry or pregnant livestock," adds Jaikaran. "If it must be used, it should be restricted to fairly mature animals fed for slaughter and should constitute no more than 20 per cent of the diet."

Grain harvested at higher moisture levels should be dried to at least 14 per cent or have a mould inhibitor added to the grain before storage. The toxicology laboratory of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will test grain and feed samples for toxins if a veterinarian suspects such a problem.

Contact: Sam Jaikaran
(403)427-5096

Hemp growth and fibre evaluation

Prior to World War II, hemp significantly contributed to the economy. It was used extensively for ropes, twine, tough thread, textiles, paper, building materials, cellulose plastics and resins as well as food and oil from the seeds. To see if hemp can be grown in the various soil zones of Alberta, four test plots were seeded across the province.

"Fibre is the main harvestable material from the hemp plant," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The test plots should provide useful information on seeding rates, agronomic management and optimum harvest time. Only low-THC varieties are being tested; almost no psychoactive substances are present in these fibre varieties."

At the brown soil site, the plots were seeded at two different row spacings and two different seeding rates. Using these different applications enables evaluation of four different plant densities.

Plant height was measured every week throughout the growing season and cuttings were taken from the plots every two weeks.

"The data collected will help determine growth patterns and evaluate fibre development and strength," says Blade. "To derive reliable data for Alberta producers, this trial is scheduled to continue for the next two years."

Demand for products developed from hemp fibre has resulted in renewed cultivation in Europe and is being considered by other countries. Currently in Alberta, hemp can only be cultivated for research purposes under license by Health Canada.

Contact: Dr. Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

Oilseed outlook

Canola prices continue to remain strong amid tight global oilseed supplies and strong demand. In particular, canola supplies will be down significantly this year, primarily driven by smaller crops in Canada and Europe.

"Reduced canola production combined with low carrying stocks of oilseeds around the world will keep overall oilseed supplies similar to last year," says Larry Ruud, market analyst. "This major drop in production is due to increased wheat acres along with lower rapeseed acres and yield problems in northern Europe. Near the end of September, Europe was active in the market buying Canadian canola. Equally important is the prospect that Europe will have very little canola available for export this crop year. This is good news for Canada."

In Canada, most trade estimates put the Canadian canola crop at 5.0 to 5.2 million tonnes, down considerably from last year. Frost damage along with poorer than expected yields indicate that the final yield may come in below the current range in trade estimates. Even if the final number is higher than this range, supplies will be sufficiently tight enough to keep prices firm.

"Domestic crush levels, expected to increase this year by 250,000 tonnes, will set another record," adds Ruud. "Full capacity won't be hit this year due to tight stocks, but new plants being built and expansions will allow for a significantly larger crush once acres increase."

Exports of canola this crop year will decline, again due to reduced supplies. It is expected that exports to every region with the exception of the United States will be down this year.

"With little down side expected in canola prices, it is expected that the market will have trouble moving below $9.50 per bushel for a sustained period of time," says Ruud. "The upside is strong given the tightness of supplies. Holding canola through the harvest/fall period is advised with another $1 to $1.50 per bushel upside possible into the mid-winter period."

Contact: Larry Ruud
(403)467-6407

Diversification at a glance

Looking for ways to diversify? Want to discover market opportunities, potential for growth, and market access? Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's rural development specialists have organized five market research seminars.

"The five seminars include: country vacations and rural tourism; food processing; special crops, greenhouses and market gardens; and a special seminar on the five steps to make diversification happen," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "These seminars are designed to help Albertans use effective market research to make sound decisions. This includes recognizing and avoiding a saturated market or a market with limited potential."

Learning to analyze customers' wants and needs, knowing where markets exist, gaining access to product knowledge, being able to analyze the competition and creating effective promotions and advertising are all marketing skills needed in today's market.

The Diversification at a Glance series offers opportunities to research, network and discover steps to help make diversification happen. Seminar are scheduled as follows:

- country vacations and rural tourism – October 30, 1996 – Westlock
- food processing – November 6, 1996 – Stony Plain

Cont'd on page 4

- special crops – November 13, 1996 – Westlock
- greenhouses and market gardens— November 20, 1996 – Stony Plain
- make it happen – December 3, 1996 – Stony Plain

To register, or for further information on these seminars, contact Kerry Engel at (403)349-4465, Westlock or Sharon Homeniuk at (403)963-6101, Stony Plain.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

Video six-packs

Whether starting an agriculture and food video collection or adding to an association's library of information for members, the six-pack video offer from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development makes economic sense.

"Four different video six-packs covering a wide range of topics have been put together for this special offer," says Ken Blackley, information officer with the multi-media branch. "Libraries, associations, businesses and individuals can get six great titles for only $99."

The four six-packs are:

- agriculture series
    - Dormant – season Grazing
    - Stop Schlerotinia
    - Stop Blackleg
    - Iron Beasts – a Guide to Tractor Maintenance
    - Field Scouting
    - Forage Secrets
- grain marketing series – five part Grain Marketing series plus one of the following:
    - Who's Managing the Farm
    - Operating the Farm Family – Joint Ventures
    - Farm Diversification (three stories)
    - Farm Diversification – What Else Can We Do?
- cattle marketing series – five part Cattle Marketing series plus one of the following:
    - A visit to a Rural Community
    - Alberta...a Good Place for Agriculture
    - Space-age Agriculture
    - A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Farm
- horse series
    - Basic Horse Training
    - Intermediate Horse Training
    - Advanced Horse Training
    - Loading and Trailering Horses
    - Horse Safety
    - Feeding the Young Horse

"These video packages were chosen from more than 150 titles available through Agriculture's multi-media library," says Blackley.

The video six-packs can be ordered by writing Multi-media branch, Communications division, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 100A, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton AB T6H 5T6; calling (403)422-3951; faxing (403)427-2861; or checking the Agriculture web site at http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ministry/comdv/video.index.html for a full listing and order form.

Contact: Ken Blackley
(403)422-3951

Agri-News Briefs

Grain bin insect trap

It's important to monitor stored grain for insects and a grain bin insect trap makes it easier. Just take a 3/4" diameter pipe and divide it into one foot long sections. Connect the sections with a coupler and glue a metal or plastic disc at each coupler to seal off that section of pipe from the rest. Drill 250 1/8" holes in each one foot section of pipe. Push the pipe down into the grain pile. As insects travel through the grain they enter the holes and fall to the bottom of the section. Every couple of days pull the pipe and count the insects. You not only get an indication of numbers but where they are concentrated. If the pile is heating, insects will be found in those areas. Generally, you will find them only in the top foot. For more information, contact Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)362-1212, Brooks.

Dairying conference

The second annual National Conference on Dairying is being held in Toronto, Ontario on November 13 - 14, 1996. This year's conference will be an excellent opportunity to network with industry leaders and gather and discuss ideas and information relative to the dairying business. Educational workshops will be offered as part of the industry trade show. The previous conference attracted participants from every major dairy-producing province in Canada. Proceedings from the first conference are also available. For more information, contact Kerri-Sue Lang at (905)342-2099, Toronto, Ontario.

Price improvements in fed cattle prices

The negative September 1 Cattle-on-Feed Report prompted a shift in market momentum that could effectively cap the fall price rally in U.S. fed cattle markets at $73.00 per cwt. Increasing supplies by late-October could prompt a downtrend in prices that would likely reach its low point in December or January. This period is anticipated to correspond with the peak marketings from the large volume of summer and early fall feedlot placements. Based on the futures market, fed cattle in September and October are much sought after, but producers may want to avoid marketing cattle in the December - February period. For more information, contact Ron Gietz, livestock market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)427-5376, Edmonton.

Tutorial for seed protectant pesticide applicators

Olds College is holding a Seed Protectant Pesticide Applicator Certificate course on November 20-22, 1996. Co-presented by Gustafson, a business unit of Uniroyal Chemical Ltd., the course covers many topics from pesticide safety, formulations, transport, spill prevention, disposal to legislation and warehousing standards. Instructors include representatives from Environmental Protection, Olds College and the industry. A home study package is mailed out to registrants prior to the course. Home study should be completed before attending the course. Registration is recommended before November 6 to ensure the home study package arrives in time for review. For more information or to register, contact Olds College, Extension Services at (403)556-4677.

Seed technology workshop

A seed technology workshop has been specially designed to answer the needs of seed cleaning plant personnel, seed growers, seed trade members and seed marketers. The workshop will be held November 13-15, 1996 at the Olds College. This is an opportunity to learn the latest in seed developments, markets and equipment use. Industry speakers will present a wide range of information to registrants. For more information, contact program coordinators Bill Witbeck, seed technology specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)782-4641 in Lacombe or Nancy Neustaeter with Extension Services, Olds College, at (403)556-4662.

Peace Country grass and grazing seminar

A two day seminar will take participants back to the basics of grass and grazing management. Based on holistic resource management the seminar will emphasize putting all ranch or farm resources to work to achieve desired goals. The seminar, held November 5 and 6, 1996 in Eaglesham, Alberta, will be taught by Don and Randee Halliday. The course is partially funded by FBMI so costs have been kept to a minimum. A fee of $54 allows two family members to attend. The cost for a single participant is $32. For more information, contact Trevor Jones, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)835-2241 in Fairview.

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AGRI-NEWS

October 28, 1996

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Outlook Agri-food '97

The agenda for Outlook Agri-Food '97: Understanding Customers and Markets, scheduled for Camrose on Friday December 13, 1996 has been finalized. The conference will provide a global perspective on market trends affecting all parts of the industry.

"The Alberta program addresses the agri-food outlook and its implications for farmers, their customers and their suppliers," says Alan Hall, regional director, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Speakers will discuss valued-added opportunities and identify the challenges and barriers to these opportunities such as available markets, market access, capital and R&D."

Program highlights include a macroeconomic forecast for North America, a Canadian Agri-Food sector outlook, and various commodity outlooks including, grains and oilseeds, livestock, inputs and supply managed commodities. A panel discussion on consumer trends and innovations in value-adding is also planned. The panel includes Jim Pratt, director for Sepp's Fine Foods Ltd. and Bernie Ketelko, president of Highland Feeders representing organizations that are successful as a result of understanding their customers and responding accordingly.

"The Outlook Agri-Food series offers vital information for all segments of the agri-food sector, including input suppliers, producers, processors and end users," says Hall. "The program promotes and encourages innovation and partnerships throughout the sector."

"Featured speakers include, Tim O'Neill, chief economist for the Bank of Montreal, Larry Martin, Director of Economic Research for the George Morris Centre, Richard Pottorff, chief economist for Doane Agricultural Services in St. Louis, Missouri and Catherine Wilson, editor of Food In Canada magazine," says Amy Lemay, with Outlook Agri Food '97. "The Honourable Walter Paszkowski, Minister, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will be the guest luncheon speaker."

Outlook Agri-Food '97 will also be presented in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Guelph, Ontario on December 10, 1996 and December 12, 1996.

Corporate sponsorships for Outlook Agriculture 1997 are available.

For more information and early discounted registration, please call 1-800-338-7506.

Contact:	*Alan Hall*	*Amy Lemay*
	(403)340-7611	*(905) 735-6901*

This Week

Outlook Agri-food '97 1
Two Leaders chosen for 4-H Hall of Fame 2
Farm Shift - a succession planning course 2
Cool wet September harvest weather 3
Celebrating our Alberta Youth 3
Hort Congress '96 3
Directing change through farm management 4
Alberta Pork Research Centre seminar 4
Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Two Leaders chosen for 4-H Hall of Fame

"As part of National 4-H Week, two outstanding 4-H leaders – Gordon Fuhr of Morinville and the late Shirley (Trimble) Story of Sherwood Park – will be recognized as the 1996 inductees into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame," announced Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"Mr. Fuhr and Mrs. Story exemplify the kind of dedication that is common to all members and leaders who contribute to the 4-H program in Alberta. It is appropriate to acknowledge these leaders during National 4-H Week, November 4-10, 1996," said Mr. Paszkowski. They will be officially inducted into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame at the Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference banquet in Red Deer on January 11, 1997.

Mrs. Story began as a 4-H member in the Namao Garden Club and the Sturgeon Valley Dairy Club in the early 1960s. In 1967, Shirley Trimble was named the Alberta Dairy Princess and the following year became the Canadian Dairy Princess.

The Ardrossan Creative Hands 4-H Club was started by Mrs. Story in 1976, where she remained an active leader for 20 years. She was president of the Strathcona 4-H District Council for three terms during the 1980s. Mrs. Story was a teacher in the County of Strathcona for 25 years. She had a special interest in public speaking and guided students and 4-H members to win top awards. Mrs. Story died in 1996 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Gordon Fuhr started out with 4-H as a member of beef and grain clubs at Rae and Riviere Qui Barre in the 1940s. As an adult, Mr. Fuhr returned to the Riviere Qui Barre 4-H Beef Club in 1970 and has remained a 4-H leader for 26 years. Mr. Fuhr also formed the Riviere Qui Barre Rancheros 4-H Light Horse Club and the Northwest Regional Heifer show in the 1970s. As well as being on the executive of the Sturgeon District and Northwest Regional 4-H Councils, Mr. Fuhr has been on the Alberta 4-H Council since 1986.

Mr. Fuhr, who is a director of Edmonton Northlands Park, along with Allan Shenfield organized the Steer-A-Day program, which raised more than $150,000 for 4-H during the 17 years Mr. Fuhr was in charge of the event.

"Shirley Story and Gordon Fuhr are fine examples of people who lead by example. National 4-H Week is a good time to bring their good deeds to the forefront. There are many more of these leaders who are dedicated to Alberta's youth," said Mr. Paszkowski.

Contact:	*Brian Hlus*	*Ted Youck*
	(403)427-2137	*(403)427-4462*

Farm Shift – a succession planning course

Succession planning is the process of mapping out a strategy for the transfer of assets, management and labour to the next generation.

"This once-in-a-lifetime issue is of major importance to most farm families," says Ted Darling, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Succession is not unique to the farming industry, but it does have great significance for farm families because many rural people view farming as both a business and a way of life."

Ideally a farm family should start an ownership plan when children or other family members become involved in the farming operation. The ownership plan involves more than tax and legal considerations. It requires open communication among all family members, and an appreciation of each family member's skills and contributions to the management of the farm.

"With optimism about agriculture running reasonably high, grain prices healthy and land prices trending upwards, there may be a large group of farmers considering retirement," says Darling. "A study of demographics suggests that the 'baby boom' generation will receive the largest inheritance ever and some of this will consist of farms and farm equipment. Farm succession is not something that should be left to resolve itself, it merits planning."

Following successful programs last year, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has organized a seminar series entitled Farm Shift – a Succession Planning Course. This eight evening program will be held in three locations, Airdrie, Claresholm and Morinville.

"The series covers business arrangements, property transfer, legal issues and many other topics," adds Darling. "Breaking the course into manageable segments has proven to be very effective. It allows some 'soak time' between sessions."

All family members are encouraged to attend together. Registration fee remains between $100 to $125 per farm family, made possible by funding from the Farm Business Management Initiatives (FBMI) program.

Course schedule is:

Airdrie – *Wednesdays* – November 20, November 27, December 4, 1996 January 8, January 22, February 5, February 19, and March 5, 1997

Claresholm – *Thursdays* – November 21, November 28, December 5, 1996 January 9, January 23, February 6, February 20, and March 6, 1997

Morinville – *Wednesday* – November 13; *Tuesdays* – December 10, 1996 January 14, January 28, February 11, February 25, March 11, and March 25, 1997

Cont'd on page 3

For more information or to register for the Farm Shift course, contact Ted Darling in Airdrie (403)948-8524; Ron Woolf in Claresholm (403)625-1445; or Janice McGregor in Morinville (403)939-4351.

Contact: *Ted Darling*
(403)948-8524

Cool wet September harvest weather

Cool and wet weather slowed September harvest operations in most of Alberta and a late September snow storm in southern and central regions shut down harvesting for a while.

"September is usually the fifth wettest month," says Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The wettest regions in Alberta were the north east and central regions. They reported varying precipitation amounts from a near normal 40 mm to 103.6 mm, 250 percent of normal, during the month."

The provincial average precipitation was 20.7 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 44.5 mm. Averages based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations in Alberta.

Brownfield reported the greatest precipitation total for September, 103.6 mm or 250 percent of normal. Cardston reported 102.1 mm of precipitation, 186 percent of normal.

"September began with below normal temperatures after hot, record breaking weather the last week of August," says Dzikowski. "The hot weather returned the second week of September providing a brief period of good harvest weather. During the third week of September cool wet weather returned to most of Alberta. Temperatures were two to four degrees below normal for the rest of the month."

The provincial average temperature was 1.1 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 10.4 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported from half to two degrees below normal.

Growing season totals for April 1 to September 29 are one week behind in the southern and north west regions, 12 days behind in the north east region and two weeks behind in the central and Peace regions.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)427-3594

Celebrating our Alberta Youth

4-H...it's more than you ever imagined! November 4 through 10 is the time to celebrate how wide 4-H reaches and contributes in communities across Canada. Alberta's 4-H membership is over 8,700 strong and boasts another 2,700 adult volunteer leaders.

"4-H is all about opportunities. For more than 75 years, 4-H has brought leadership and development programs into Alberta communities" says Ted Youck, head of the home economics and 4-H branch. " Young people *"Learn to Do By Doing"* through their club projects. Currently there are more than 20 projects to choose from. They range from the traditional variety of livestock projects, and crafts and sewing to computers, environment, photography, small engines, veterinary science and the new entrepreneurial project, Business Cents" notes Youck.

In their clubs, members learn how to run a meeting and hold office in an organization. Personal development extends to public speaking, a key component of the 4-H program. "Alberta 4-H clubs continue to grow with technology" adds Youck. "An exciting new addition to the Alberta program is the 4-H web site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4h**. As well, this fall **Telus (AGT)** is sponsoring an Internet contest. Clubs have the opportunity to design a club web page. They will also demonstrate their Internet surfing skills by correctly answering a series of skill testing questions. The winning club will be awarded an Internet-ready, Pentium multi-media computer with printer sponsored by **Viridian**".

Members and leaders also have the opportunity to be active beyond the club level at district, regional and provincial camps, speaking competitions, project events, exchanges and special events such as Club Week. New for 1997 is Project Congress. This summer event invites all 4-H members and leaders to participate in a variety of project related activities. Current and former members are also eligible for a wide variety of post-secondary scholarships. The 4-H program administers more than 80 privately sponsored scholarships worth close to $49,000.

The national awareness week provides an opportunity for 4-H members and leaders to profile 4-H in their communities. In this province, Alberta Treasury Branches, one of 4-H's proud sponsors, is recognizing clubs by inviting them to put displays in local branches.

In 1995, there were more than 42,000 members and 12,000 volunteer leaders in the national 4-H movement.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan* *Ted Youck*
(403)422-4H4H *(403)427-4462*

Hort Congress '96

The Alberta Horticultural Congress Annual Conference, designed for commercial vegetable growers and professional vegetable growers, fruit growers, drieds or herb growers, greenhouse growers and florists, will be held on November 7 to 9, 1996 at the Mayfield Inn and Trade Centre in Edmonton.

"The conference is set up to give professional and commercial growers up to date production and marketing information,"

Cont'd on page 4

says Bill MacFarlane, president of the Alberta Hort Congress planning committee. "The three day conference is filled with presentations from 62 guest speakers, all noted professionals."

Vegetable varieties, new seed varieties, nutrition, herbs and specialty crops, marketing challenges, on-farm marketing techniques, co-op marketing and computers in the greenhouse, are but a few of the topics being covered.

"In addition to our scheduled speakers, more than 150 exhibitors will be set up at the trade show," says MacFarlane. "The Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association, Fruit Growers Society of Alberta and Flowers and Herb Growers Association of Alberta annual meetings will be held in conjunction with the conference."

For more information, contact Simone Demers-Collins at the Hort Congress office (403)422-1789, Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Simone Demers-Collins
(403)422-1789

Directing change through farm management

Over the past five years, the Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) has trained over 11,000 farm managers. The calendar of learning events for the upcoming sixth season continues to offer timely, relevant farm management information to Alberta producers.

"The focus of FBMI programming is beginning to shift," says Arla Trueblood, FBMI program representative. "Past concentration was on traditional classroom training. This season, information will be delivered via Internet, video conferencing and through print media. FBMI is also funding research projects of interest to Alberta farmers."

An intensive needs assessment showed that farmers wanted a variety of learning opportunities. One of the limitations identified is that while farmers like to learn in a group setting, they are not willing to travel a great distance in winter conditions or during peak farm activity times.

"The assessment done in February, 1996, showed that 10 per cent of farmers are already hooked up to the Internet; that number will have increased by now," says Trueblood. "Even at the time of the assessment, 39 per cent responded that they felt the Internet would be an effective way to access information."

FBMI has responded to this need with programs on farm financial analysis, marketing and current production information available on the Internet. To find out more about the Internet, classroom opportunities are being offered for anyone not yet familiar with it.

"Traditional classroom training hasn't been abandoned," adds Trueblood. "FBMI will still offer training in the areas of marketing, succession planning, holistic resource management, diversification ventures, entrepreneurship, computers, and financial management."

Video and print information on human resource management, diversification and sources of assistance for potential entrepreneurs is also being developed. Research projects are underway on topic such as economics of precision farming and hay for the export market.

"An eight page program calendar is available and outlines all of FBMI's learning opportunities," says Trueblood. "If it has not been received in the mail by the end of October, call toll free 310-0000 and ask for 556-4322."

Contact: Arla Trueblood
(403)954-3745

Alberta Pork Research Centre seminar

The Alberta Pork Research Centre presents its first annual seminar on Friday, November 15, 1996 in Red Deer at the Red Deer Lodge.

"The seminar will present some of the latest research findings and other pertinent information to hog producers and the swine industry," says Art Lange P.Ag., swine specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The Alberta Pork Research Centre is a new initiative to integrate swine research in Alberta. Presently it includes Alberta Agriculture, Food an Rural Development; the University of Alberta and the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation."

Registration begins at 9:30 and seminar presentations at 10:00 am. The program is expected to conclude about 3:30 pm. Pre-registration cost, prior to November 12, is $25 per person, and includes lunch. The cost is $30 per person at the door. To pre-register call 427-5096 or fax 427-1439 in Edmonton (toll free via 310-0000 from anywhere in Alberta).

"Many internationally recognized speakers will be featured at this seminar," adds Lange. "They include Dr. Peter English from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland who will speak on improving stockmanship on hog operations. His presentation includes: improving the appeal of the job; selecting the best applicant; effective education and training; good working conditions; and, enlightening management. Dr. George Foxcroft from the University of Alberta will speak on management of the early weaned sow."

Speakers from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development include Dr. Frank Aherne, Dr. Roy Kirkwood, Marvin Salomons, Bert Dening, Dr. Julia Keenliside, and Sam Jaikaran. They will cover topics such as feeding and management of grower-finisher pigs, controlled reproduction for increased profit, optimizing pig farm output, essentials for

Cont'd on page 5

economic success, putting a value on peas, and an update of the Alberta Quality Pork Program.

The afternoon will conclude with a panel discussion involving all speakers.

Contact: *Art Lange*
(403)427-5096

Agri-News Briefs

Final "Crow Payment"

All Albertans eligible for the final Western Grain Transportation Payments Program, Crow payments, should have received their cheque. Mail out of the final payments began in early October and full distribution was expected to take one month. Almost 212,000 cheques were processed as a final payment on the freight subsidies program which terminated August 1, 1995. For further information, or to make inquiry if you have not received your cheque, call toll free 1-800-667-9962 or write to the WGTPP administration at P.O. Box 4046, Regina, Saskatchewan S4R 3R9.

Freight Rate Information

1996/97 freight rate information for all prairie shipping points is now available. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Transportation Branch, working with the Farm Business Management Branch in Olds, has put the information on the Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Information Network (FBMInet) Bulletin Board System. The database is similar to last year. For some Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) deductions, there is a "n/a" in the individual columns. In these cases, the CWB has not provided a Freight Adjustment Factor (FAF) and there is no effective deduction. In most cases the CWB advise that these stations are no longer active. However, there is still a possibility of some shipments and the CWB will provide an updated FAF. Access to the FBMI BBS can be made through the Internet using Telnet. As an alternative, the information is also available on the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Internet site at URL http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/railrate/index.html For further information on freight rates, please contact Cliff Weber at 427-0364.

Fast track to world agri-food markets

Tapping into profitable international agri-food markets is the focus of a new pilot program Olds College offers this November. The program is comprised of eight one-day seminars offered once a month over a period of eight months. Each module focuses on skill development using agri-food case studies and agricultural examples. The modules are: getting ready - assessing your export readiness; your business plan for export marketing; assessing export opportunities; getting to market; implementing your business plan; making the sale; getting paid; and, export market for specific agri-food industries. To register for this program, contact Olds College's International Projects Department at (403)556-8200. For further information, contact Ed Shaw at (403)556-8236 or Donna Moskalyk at (403)556-4703.

Childhood farm memories to read and enjoy

From a child's eye view, through the words and pictures of Canadians who grew up on farms from Newfoundland to British Columbia, *Down on the Farm: Childhood Memories of Farming in Canada* is a collection of personal reminiscences that look at life on the family farm from the 1880's to the 1940's. Revisit memories or give young Canadians an idea of what life was like for farm children in decades past. This new book by Jean Cochrane is now available for $12.95 at bookstores across Canada. It may also be ordered by calling toll free in western Canada to 1-800-360-8826, and in eastern Canada, 1-800-565-9523.

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AGRI-NEWS

November 4, 1996

DEC 11 1996

Feed consumption needs over winter

When winter hits Alberta, the prolonged cold weather can be particularly hard on cattle. Feed intake must supply the energy needed to keep cattle warm and maintain their body condition, let alone the demands of late pregnancy and lactation which place an additional burden on a cow.

"Last year, with the severe, persistent cold, there were some cases of animals dying due to lack of sufficient energy in the feed, or insufficient quantity of feed," says Ray Fenton, DVM, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Severe weather conditions create serious energy demands on any animal. Cattle are efficient users of forages, but they do require a minimum quantity and quality of feedstuffs."

Being ready for the coming season is the first step in helping livestock weather the cold. Cattle in good weight and physical condition have an advantage going into winter.

"Providing shelter for cattle to use during harsh days and nights will make a great deal of difference in livestock's energy expenditure," says Fenton. "Extreme temperatures and high winds can sap energy from livestock at an amazing rate. Feed rations during the coldest days should be increased or higher energy feeds, such as range pellets or barley added, to increase protein and energy intake. General feed requirements during winter is approximately 40 pounds per cow daily."

It is essential that producers separate their breeding herd into different management groups. Young stock, old cows and other animals not able to compete as well for feed must be separated. Nursing females and their calves should be separated from the main herd and provided with shelter and the best feed. Mature pregnant and open cows can make up the balance of the herd.

"The livestock industry is an excellent example of producers helping producers," adds Fenton. "Through the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC), and with owner cooperation, a Resource Team of knowledgeable cattlemen can visit herds and offer advice and management procedures to benefit the livestock and the owner.

"Every Alberta producer knows how taxing an extreme winter can be for all concerned. Being ready for -40° is half the battle. Making adjustments to your herd, feed or shelter provisions in the middle of a -40° stretch is far harder than planning and preparing ahead."

Contact: *Ray Fenton, DVM*
(403)427-4615

This Week

Feed consumption needs over winter 1
Maximizing equestrian performance 2
Council members sought 2
Communities helping children and families 2
4-H dresses western with Lammle's 3
Getting stock waterers ready for winter 3
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Maximizing equestrian performance

Being a tough competitor is demanding on both horse and rider. How to ride and perform with energy and confidence, and have fun doing it, is the topic of one of the sessions at the 1997 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference.

"The underlying theme of this year's conference focuses on horse and rider performance," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and one of the conference organizers. "Topics from selecting the performance horse, training and developing a champion, assessing athletic movement, care and conditioning of performance horses, and preparing the rider for competition, will all be covered at the 1997 conference."

This premiere horse conference will be held January 10 – 12, 1997 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

Included among the 14 internationally recognized speakers, Barbra Schulte, vice president of the National Cutting Horse Association, will discuss sport science for riders.

"One of this year's special features is a practical application presentation by Barbra Schulte on how to perform to the highest level possible even when the pressure is on," says Burwash. "Schulte has shown horses from childhood. She trained cutting horses professionally from 1982-1994 and for the past three years she has been teaching "Mental Toughness" training for equestrians. Experience and observations as a professional trainer and competitor, gives authenticity to her role as teacher and instructor."

Conference registration is $75.00 per person. For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Council members sought

The Honourable Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is seeking applications from Albertans for Council Members for the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council.

"The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council is a Crown Corporation established by the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act," says Don Dawson, director of human resources, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The Council is responsible for supervising operations and helping establish agricultural marketing boards and commissions."

The Council's main focus is to enable commodity organizations to assist producers in their efforts to be more profitable and globally competitive in Alberta's expanding agriculture and food industry.

"Members of the Council should be proven leaders with senior level experience in the agricultural and marketing sectors and have experience working in a Board setting," adds Dawson. "An in-depth knowledge of agricultural products and marketing issues in Alberta is essential."

From applications received, candidates chosen must have the ability to work with related stakeholders, the government and the public. Well developed written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills are also required.

The Council meets approximately 10 times per year. The Council Members are appointed for a period of up to three years. Members will be paid remuneration and expenses as outlined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

"Albertans interested in applying or receiving further information, should reply in confidence by November 18, 1996, quoting competition number 96MABCO-004," says Dawson.

All applications must be sent to: Executive Search, Alberta Personnel Administration Office, 3rd Floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8. Telephone: (403)420-4398, Fax: (403)422-0468.

Contact: *G. Don Dawson*
(403)422-5216

Communities helping children and families

Communities across Alberta are developing better ways to meet the needs of children and families. Over the last year, people have been getting together to make sure children in their communities are growing up in safe and healthy environments; families having problems get the help they need before a crisis occurs; children, teens and parents know where to find help when needed; and, services recognize and respect people's cultural heritage.

"Everyone has something to offer," says John Lackey, Commissioner of Services for Children and Families. "In the past year, more than 10,000 Albertans came forward to play a role in creating a new, community-based, preventive system for helping children and families."

Youth are encouraged to get involved in this important initiative by sharing their ideas about what interests kids, what kinds of programs would work best and how to help children and teens that are having difficulties.

"Involving 4-H youth is a real benefit in planning programs and services for at-risk children in the community," says Lackey. "It is an opportunity to learn to do by doing, while helping a broad range of children and youth within the community."

Cont'd on page 3

Local planning groups that are active throughout the province can benefit from the first-hand insight of 4-H youth, leaders, parents and community members involved with children, teens and families on a day-to-day basis. There are ongoing opportunities for community members to be involved in planning community-based services.

"4-H leaders have an excellent view into the needs of kids and families in the communities where they live and work," adds Lackey. "They have a practical perspective and a tremendous influence in the lives of children."

To join a working or focus group, or offer ideas and suggestions about children and families in your community, call the nearest office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *John Lackey*
(403)422-5011

4-H dresses western with Lammle's

Lammle's Western Wear is committed to Alberta's 4-H program in a big way. A sponsorship agreement was recently signed between Doug Lammle, owner of Lammle's Western Wear, and Henry Wiegman of the provincial 4-H office. This multi-faceted sponsorship has a presence at all levels of Alberta's 4-H program.

"The Denver Western 4-H Horse Classic Award trip winners are among the first 4-Hers to benefit from Lammle's partnership," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "At the club level, members and leaders will receive a 15 per cent discount on all regular priced merchandise at all 20 Lammle's Western Wear locations. Members simply show their 4-H membership card to the cashier."

In addition, each club will receive a Lammle's Western Wear gift certificate to use for volunteer recognition or member achievement. These certificates will be mailed out with club supplies. 4-H participants at district and regional events will receive a coupon for a 20 per cent discount. Participants in all provincial programs will receive coupons for a 25 per cent discount on merchandise.

"We're proud to be a major sponsor of Alberta 4-H," says Genevieve Sawchyn, promotions and advertising manager of Lammle's Western Wear. "We feel privileged to be part of such an important organization and we're proud to support Alberta youth."

Lammle's Western Wear is an Alberta owned and operated company that has been in business for 12 years. They have outlets in Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge and Lloydminster.

"As a major sponsor, Lammle's Western Wear will contribute to provincial programs throughout the 4-H year," adds Wiegman. "They are directly contributing to 4-H Leaders' conference; 4-H Club week; 4-H Project Congress; 4-H Horse Classic; 4-H Selections; and, 4-H People Developing People.

"We are very pleased to have Lammle's as a major sponsor. 4-H benefits considerable from the sponsorship of businesses. On behalf of Alberta 4-H members, I thank Lammle's Western Wear for their support of the program."

Contact: *Henry Wiegman*
(403)427-4532

Getting stock waterers ready for winter

Over summer it's easy to forget when the stock waterer froze up last winter. But with winter brewing on the horizon, it's time to get that waterer back into service or install a new one.

"The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) monitored several waterers during the winters of 1990 and 1993," says Ken Williamson, agriculture engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The recorded operating costs range from the most efficient at $24/year to the least efficient at $100/year. If your current waterer is still up to the job, it should be serviced while the weather is still warm."

When doing a fall check and service of waterers, remember to:

- check insulation in the base. Many older waterers had very poor insulation. If this is the case some new rigid Styrofoam insulation can be installed. The thermostats in some waterers sense the temperature in the base, not the water temperature. In these waterers heat loss through the base can be very high;
- check the weather stripping and caulking around the base. A waterer base that allows the wind to blow through will use a lot of electricity. Access doors and panels can be major heat loss points;
- check the heat tape. Check the electrical outlet with a trouble light to make sure there is power. Plug the heat tape in and hold a ziplock bag full of ice against the thermostat to see if the tape will turn on;
- check the thermostat on the waterer as well. The thermostat should be set as low as practical; and,
- check the float valve to make sure it is working properly.

"If your waterer is in poor condition or has been causing problems consider one of the new energy efficient or energy free waterers," says Williamson. "Energy efficient electrically

Cont'd on page 4

heated waterers use extra insulation, more direct heating of the water and optional floating covers to reduce heat loss."

Many energy free waterers have also proven successful in cold prairie conditions. These waterers work like a thermos bottle and rely on retaining the heat in the water. This is accomplished by using lots of insulation, floating covers, and ground heat. For energy free waterers to work several critical conditions must be met:

- proper design, some are designed for milder winters only;
- proper installation is critical;
- proper maintenance, cattle are sloppy drinkers so the ice build up around the drinker lids must be chipped away daily during cold weather;
- proper adjustment, water level is important in keeping the drinker covers in place;
- proper sizing, too few animals will result in not enough use and freeze up; and,
- the waterer must be used daily.

If replacing an old electric unit with an energy free unit, it is best to install a heat tape on the water supply line. The small riser pipe usually used with electric waterers will freeze off.

More information on checking and servicing waterers is available through local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offices. The PAMI Research Update #706 - *Energy Free Water Fountains* is also available at local agriculture offices.

Contact: Ken Williamson
(403)340-5324

Agri-News Briefs

Weed control for dryland rotations

Management changes and new technology for crop production will be the focus of a one day conference on December 3, 1996 at the Cypress Centre, Medicine Hat. In the context of reduced tillage and weed control, the agenda will follow two streams of interest, crop summer fallow and recropping stubble. Speakers from across western Canada and the U.S. will discuss cropping systems, rotations, controlling problem weeds and new developments in herbicide application. Displays will be available for viewing throughout the day. The conference is organized by the farmer members of the Southern Alberta Conservation Association in cooperation with PFRA, the M.D. of Cypress Agricultural Service Board and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Registration is $25 and includes lunch. Those registering before November 26 will have their names entered in a draw for one tonne of phosphate fertilizer. For further information, contact Orville Yanke (403)527-0145 in Medicine Hat or Brad Haas (403)838-3765 in Hilda. For information and to register, call Dave Spencer (403)529-3616 in Medicine Hat.

Reducing costs in your cow herd

Pursue Profits is the name of a one-day seminar being held this fall. The seminar will focus on reducing costs of production, discovering feed alternatives, understanding banking institutions, increasing profits from calves, investigating endectocide strategies, and enhancing record keeping. Keynote speaker is Dr. Larry Corah, a beef cattle specialist with cow-calf nutrition and reproduction from Kansas State University. Dr. Corah coordinates the Extension Animal Science Program and the cow-calf production research project. Three dates and locations are available to choose from: November 19 at the Veteran Community Centre in Veteran; November 20 at the Burnt Lake Livestock Mart in Red Deer; and, November 21 at the Crossfield Community Centre in Crossfield. Registration fee is $25 and must be submitted by November 15, 1996. To register, call 1-800-387-6036. For further information, contact Ken Ziegler at (403)845-8200 in Rocky Mountain House, Don Milligan (403)556-4220 Olds, Delyn Jensen (403)854-5500 in Hanna, Susan Markus (403)578-3970 in Coronation or Rob Hand (403)340-7005 in Red Deer.

Finding Common Ground

Negotiating a win-win agreement is a learned skill. As well as helping prepare for the negotiation process, a new book by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development deals with treating opponents with respect while ensuring your own needs are taken care of. The 53-page book, *Finding Common Ground, Negotiating Agreements* includes a sample agreement and several worksheets. Copies are available at Agriculture district offices or can be mail-ordered. The price of this new publication is $8 plus GST. Add $2 shipping and handling plus GST per order if ordering by mail. For further information, contact the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 -113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, phone: 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391, in Edmonton.

Test feed for balanced rations

Good quality feed is in short supply and grain and straw aren't plentiful. It's time to test feeds to help make the best use of feeds and balance rations. Knowing the quality of feeds is important when deciding what to feed first and how to manage feed supplies. Feed probes can be borrowed from local Agriculture offices. Different types of probes are available including a new model. The new probe has a three inch core sampler for silage pits. Powered by a 1/2" drill, this sampler allows producers to sample silage pits up to three feet deep without opening the pit. Feed tests cost as little as $25, and that's money well spent in years where good quality feed is hard to come by. For further information, contact Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)675-2252 in Athabasca.

Innovations in irrigated crop production

What's new in irrigation systems; high yields and sustainable agriculture; fertilizer management and new developments in herbicide application technology are some of topics being covered at the Innovations in Irrigated Crop Production seminar. The seminar is on December 4, 1996 at the Taber Community Centre. Registrations and display viewing starts at 8:00 a.m. on the day of the seminar. The seminar is organized by the Alberta Sugar Beet Grower's Marketing Board, the Southern Alberta Conservation Association, the Pulse Commission (Zone 1) and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For further information, contact Rob Dunn (403)381-5119 in Lethbridge, Roger Hohm or Jack Payne at (403)223-7908 in Taber.

Pork expansion seminars

The past few years have seen considerable expansion in international markets for pork. A series of meetings/seminars, co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation and industry partners, will be held across the province in November and December. The seminars will focus on market expansion and the opportunities that exist for further growth. Pork producers and municipal administrators, investors, grain farmers and suppliers will have the chance to speak with industry leaders on global market trends, investment models, environmental concerns, export opportunities and economic spin-off to producers, communities and the province. A panel of processors, marketers, environmental siting experts and financiers will be at each session. There is no registration fee, however, pre-registration with Don Hoover at 1-800-909-6567 is requested. Seminars run from 1:30-4:30 p.m. and are scheduled at:

Leduc	Denham Inn	November 14
Taber	Community Centre	November 18
Vulcan	Legion Hall	November 19
Olds	Olds College – Alumni Centre	November 20
Drumheller	Drumheller Inn	November 21
Lacombe	Memorial Centre	November 22
Wainwright	Communiplex	November 25
Westlock	District Community Hall	November 28
Fairview	Dunvegan Inn	November 29
St. Paul	Elks Hall	December 2

Alternative livestock symposium

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is sponsoring a one-day symposium to provide an update on the emerging alternative livestock industries. Challenges, risks and opportunities exist in the major alternative livestock industries. The symposium will focus on Bison, Elk and Deer, Ostrich, Emu and Rhea, Wild Boar and Aquaculture. The seminar will be held at the Capri Hotel in Red Deer and begins at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 26, 1996. Specifically intended for representatives from lending institutions, federal and provincial government, featured leading industry speakers will address the status of their industry, market opportunities, major challenges facing their industry, and the cost of starting and maintaining a farming operation. Product displays will be available for viewing and the noon meal will give attendees a chance to taste some Alberta specialty meat products. Space is limited. Confirm registration by November 8, 1996 to Doug Bienert (403)427-4616.

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AGRI-NEWS

November 11, 1996

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32 years of support and sponsorship

TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power Celebrate 32 years of sponsoring Alberta 4-H Leaders.

Thanks to TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power, eight Alberta 4-H Leaders from across Alberta attended the Montana 4-H Leaders Forum last month in Helena, Montana. 1996 marked the 32nd consecutive year that the two utility companies have provided funds for Alberta 4-H Leaders to attend this training event south of the boarder.

Alberta 4-H Leaders, Donna Conrad from the Peace Regional Council (Grande Prairie); Rose Jacula from Clandonald 4-H Beef (Vermilion); Cathy Webb, Battle River 4-H Canine Club (Donalda); Beth MacGougan, Coronation 4-H Range Riders (Coronation); Becky Horne, West Foothills Multi (Bragg Creek); Mary Hadley, Pembina North 4-H Light Horse (Westlock); Ellen Bonde, Chinook 4-H Riders Multi (Rocky Mountain House); and Marlene Waldner, Wild Rose 4-H Equestrian Club (Medicine Hat) were able to take part in a variety of workshops along with their American neighbours. The exchange of information, sharing of ideas and the chance to learn new training activities for their 4-H clubs was a highlight for the Alberta 4-H leaders.

Alberta 4-H Leaders are selected by their regional 4-H councils based on their involvement and commitment to the 4-H program.

Contact:	*Marguerite Stark* *(403)948-8510*	
	Rose Jacula *853-2363*	*Donna Conrad* *567-2233*
	Cathy Webb *883-2466*	*Beth MacGougan* *578-2388*
	Marlene Waldner *527-6405*	*Becky Horne* *949-3272*
	Mary Hadley *349-2686*	*Ellen Bonde* *845-6894*

Special needs of the performance horse

The demands placed on the performance horse also means discipline specific problems can present themselves.

"Whether you're training or competing in long distance, dressage, hunter, trail riding or endurance, it is beneficial to know how these activities can affect your horse," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Many equestrian competitors have questions on metabolic stresses that can show up in the performance horse. One of the sessions featured at the upcoming Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is designed to provide information and insight on this subject."

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

32 years of support and sponsorship 1

Special needs of the performance horse 1

Retained ownership 2

Future leadership development needs to be identified 2

Don't take communicating for granted 3

Hog inventories underestimated 3

Harvest havoc on special crops 4

Briefs 5

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Dr. Trish Dowling, DVM, MS, will conduct the session on the myths and truths about controlling pain and inflammation in horses. Her session will also cover metabolic diseases in long distance performance horses.

"Dr. Dowling is a highly regarded large animal specialist and is the only certified clinical pharmacologist in Canada," says Burwash. "She has been involved with horses for 20 years and has personally competed in dressage, hunter, combined training, competitive trail riding and endurance."

Dr. Dowling is one of 14 internationally recognized speakers making presentations at the conference. The Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is an annual Alberta event. The conference will be held January 10 - 12, 1997 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Les Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Retained ownership

More cow/calf producers are thinking about retained ownership of their calves. Retained ownership, owning cattle in a feedlot, is a consideration that scares many cow/calf producers.

"Producers have to ask themselves whether this is an option that suits them," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Depending on individual situations, it can be a practice that greatly increases returns."

Value Added Cattle, a U.S. publication, refers to three circumstances where retaining ownership through feedlot phase may increase net returns to cow/calf operations. They are:

- cattleman wants to move market timing of weaned calves to a more desirable month if they are being sold at times of the year that historically provide poor markets;
- calves having excellent feedlot performance and carcass value, are undervalued by stocker and feeder markets; and,
- calves will sell at very poor prices because of a temporary downturn in the market and the cattleman needs to buy time.

"It is essential to determine the real value of the calves as feeders when deciding whether to retain ownership or not," says Koberstein. "Evaluating retained ownership will, in most cases, boil down to doing a break-even calculation on your calves. Producers need to go through this process to make an informed decision."

Cashflow needs are a major part of the decision. Every operation is different and each custom feedlot offers different services. If retained ownership is preferred producers should check into management alternatives for dealing with cashflow needs.

"Retained ownership means feeding your own cattle after weaning or sending them to a custom lot," adds Koberstein. "After doing an evaluation of your situation, whether or not retained ownership is practised, at least you took a critical look at the current situation and made a sound, informed decision."

Contact: *Brian Koberstein*
(403)361-1240

Future leadership development needs to be identified

Leadership Education for Agricultural Development (Alberta LEAD), a program of leadership development activities, has initiated a second phase to a research project to determine future develoment needs in agricultural and rural community leadership.

The Rural Education and Development Association (REDA), the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are partners in this cooperative project established in 1993.

"Leadership in agriculture is necessary to meet future needs," says John Melicher, Executive Director of REDA. "Encouraging and supporting self-reliance for industry and community based decision making and action is essential for the viability of agriculture and rural communities in the 21st century."

The second pase of this research entails sending a survey to 1,500 rural Albertans to validate the initial results and to identify provincial priorities to the responses to key questions.

The research will provide answers to six leadership development questions:

1. Is there a need for a program to build leadership capacity in rural Alberta? What are the benefits? Who will benefit?
2. What are the major issues in group decision making and group action confronting agricultural and rural community leaders between now and 2005 AD?
3. What are the biggest barriers or obstacles community leadership will face in successfully addressing the issues?
4. What leadership skills will people need to successfully overcome the barriers?
5. How are those skills best developed?
6. Who is going to provide the necessary leadership?

Cont'd on page 3

This research project began with individual interviews and focus groups with Albertans who have a major interest in the future of agriculture and rural communities.

"The focus groups were helpful in answering several questions as well as describing changes that have occurred over the past 10 - 20 years," says June Morgan, of F. J. Morgan Enterprises the company contracted to conduct this research. "Leadership development is indeed an agricultural industry and rural community issue. Results from the initial research will be presented to seven counties and municipal districts for reaction."

Rural Albertans are asked to watch for this survey in their mail and to take the time to complete and return it by the end of November, 1996.

Contact: June Morgan
(403)451-5959

Don't take communicating for granted

A lot of reasons are sited for the success or failure of an organization. More than any other factor, communication makes the difference.

"Communication, as an exchange of information, is a fairly simple concept," says Cindy Bishop, organizational development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Communicating in an organization, however, can be quite a challenge. Organizations often falter because of communication breakdown. Misunderstandings, mixed messages, failure to connect, unclear expectations, poorly run meetings, sloppy documentation and unmet goals are the trademarks of courting disaster."

Healthy organizations value and practice effective communication in their operations, programs and activities. A commitment to clear communication usually pays off with increased productivity.

Some key communication characteristics shared by successful organizations are:

- members are familiar with the organization's mission and goals. The task, or objective, is well understood and accepted by the group;
- members actively listen to one another. Every idea is given fair hearing. The group recognizes its differences by listening to and understanding opposing views;
- there is a lot of discussion and virtually everyone participates. Members are encouraged to give and listen to suggestions until a solution to a problem is found or a decision is made; and,
- members are given a clear idea of what is expected of them Alternatively, members are entitled to expectations of the organization, such as recognition of skills, talents, knowledge, contributions. These must also be clearly communicated.

"It's helpful for agricultural and community based organizations to assess the quality of their communications," adds Bishop. "Each member, as well as the organization as a whole, should consider the impact made when they communicate. Determine the image your style of communication presents to other members and to people outside the organization. This includes visual, oral and written communications."

Organizations must ensure that the information needs of members and their contacts are being met. Leading edge organizations use communication to inform, make decisions, solve problems, gather support, partner and promote.

"There are a number of factsheets and other resources available that agricultural/rural groups might find helpful," says Bishop. "Presentations and consultations on effective communications can also be arranged."

There are 10 organizational development specialists on staff with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Contact your local Agriculture office for more information.

Contact: Cindy Bishop
(403)986-8985

Hog inventories underestimated

The September USDA Hogs and Pigs Report was positive to prices when released late that month.

"Cash hog prices were remarkably resilient in early October, with "pork month" promotions being credited for some of the price strength," says Ron Gietz, livestock market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The market tone has changed dramatically since then. Futures and cash markets are low and analysts are distancing themselves from official USDA estimates."

A consensus is emerging in the marketplace that the USDA has under-estimated inventories, particularly for breeding stock. For the last few years the concern has usually been that government numbers over-estimated potential production.

"With the recent downturn in feedgrain prices and slaughter statistics showing reduced sow kills, there is a lot of talk about expansion and new hog units," adds Gietz. "While most of these expansions won't impact production until late 1997 or later, there is concern that earlier expansion decisions may have gone undetected in the official numbers."

Cont'd on page 4

Weekly Alberta production averaged 53,867 head in 1995, the highest level on record. For 1996, slaughter is expected to decline about four per cent but exports will be up dramatically, for a net increase in total production. Further production increases in the province are anticipated in 1997.

"Currently, U.S. cash hog prices are hovering in the low to mid $50/cwt level," says Gietz. "By late 1996, U.S. prices may rebound slightly. For much of 1997, U.S. prices could trade in the mid-$50 range. Trade in the $40 range is definitely expected by the fourth quarter of 1997, as expansion begins to add to production levels. Based on this U.S. outlook, Alberta hog prices could trade in the $1.60 to $1.70 per kg range over the next few months, dropping lower later in 1997."

The projections are based on a gradually appreciating Canadian dollar, increasing by one cent U.S. every four months.

Contact: Ron Gietz
(403)427-5376

Harvest havoc on special crops

The mix of weather over much of Western Canada played havoc with harvest operations. Fortunately, about 60 per cent of the specialty crop had been harvested (with favourable grades) before precipitation started hampering harvest operations.

"Rain and snow caused some crop deterioration," says Don Hansen, market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In particular, much of the affected lentil crop graded No. 2."

By late October, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food reported that 96 per cent of mustard, 94 per cent of peas and 97 per cent of lentils had been harvested in that province. Saskatchewan's yields are pegged at 32.4 bushels per acre for peas, compared to last year's average of 24.5 bushels per acre. Other prospective yield estimates are: lentils – 1201 lbs per acre, mustard – 1091 lbs per acre, canary seed – 1102 lbs per acre, and sunflower – 1102 lbs per acre.

"With the pulses, the market price for edible green peas (for splitting) rallied mid-month, trading at $7.50 per bushel, delivered to plant," says Hansen. Ample supplies of yellow peas have weighed on the market with bids currently near $6 per bushel, down from $6.25 per bushel last month. The gap between greens and yellows has widened to about $1.50 per bushel from 25 cents per bushel last month."

Foreign protein requirements continue to be displaced by other commodities. As such, the Winnipeg feed pea futures December contract continues to hover just below the $200 U.S. per tonne mark. Feed peas have been pressured down to near the $5.25 per bushel level.

Reports of foreign purchasers buying feed pea substitutes and the large feed wheat and barley crop are likely responsible.

With multi-year supplies, the Eston market remains depressed with current bids in the 13 to 14 cents per pound range. Foreign buyers are presently looking at some of the lower grades of lentils with some support coming from No. 2 laird sales to Algeria mid-month.

"Harvesting of brown and oriental mustard is nearing completion with good yields and grades reported," adds Hansen. "They are currently being bid at 18 and 17 cents per pound, respectively. Yellow mustard bids are spiralling upward, with bids reported at almost 40 cents per pound."

A combination of factors, including favourable weather in Saskatchewan, large acreage increases and above average yields, have pressured canary seed lower this month. Canary bids are currently near the 15 cents per pound level, about three cents per pound lower than last month.

Contact: Don Hansen
(403)422-3099

Agri-News Briefs

Egg-Zactly

All you ever wanted to know about eggs but didn't know who to ask. The Canadian Egg Marketing Agency now has their own home page. From hard-boiled facts about eggs, how to use them, their nutritional value and versatility to recipes, it's all on the 'net'. Tips on proper food handling, just as important with eggs as with other high protein foods, can also be found. The site even has an *Ask the Eggsperts* interactive page where you can send questions or comments to the Agency and they'll respond. Call up their home page at **www.canadegg.ca** and browse awhile. If you don't have access to the Internet, the Agency can be reached by phoning (613)238-2514 ext. 235.

Rural Crime Watch

Neighbours looking out for neighbours, that's the whole idea behind the Rural Crime Watch program. As a voluntary community-owned organization, RCW is a crime watch group working with the local R.C.M.P. to organize a community policing program. RCW focuses on four elements: property identification, home and building security, Report A Poacher, and Range Patrol. The program entails reporting all unusual or suspicious vehicles or occurrences to the R.C.M.P. Crimes such as break and enter, theft, vandalism, trespassing and poaching are increasing in rural areas. A well organized RCW program can do a lot to reduce these crimes. For more information on Rural Crime Watch and how to get one started in your community, call your local R.C.M.P. detachment.

Teens making a market impact

Teens are a significant target group for food companies. Teen market research shows that more than half of teenage girls and more than one-third of teenage boys do some food shopping each week for their family. That's a significant number of teens making more decisions about their lifestyle and their needs. Food companies are realizing the spending power and influence teens have. In response to this trend, advertising and marketing directed at teenage consumers is designed to establish brand loyalty early.

Iron important for adolescent growth and development

Iron plays a key role in good health. It is a primary component of the proteins haemoglobin and myoglobin – the oxygen carriers in blood. Body cells must have oxygen for the energy to function. This is especially true during the adolescent growth spurt with its dynamic developmental changes that increase nutrient needs. Haemoglobin carries oxygen in red blood cells and myoglobin is the oxygen reserve in muscle cells. Low iron means less energy is available to function properly. Healthy diet planning is important at all ages, including the teenage years. Protein, the main source of iron, is a necessity. Iron from protein sources such as meats and eggs is easiest for the body to absorb. However, plant food such as cereals, grains, dried peas and beans can also contribute iron and should not be overlooked. Health Canada recommends 10 mg of iron each day for teenage boys and 13 mg for teenage girls. Foods high in vitamin C will enhance iron absorption. A glass of orange or tomato juice is an easy source of vitamin C. For more information, contact Suzanne Tenold, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)948-8504.

Dry pasta firm opens in Edmonton

Alberta's geographic location, which provides cost efficient access to large volumes of superior quality grains, including the best durum wheat in the world, a skilled workforce and a highly efficient and modern distribution infrastructure, made Edmonton the city of choice for Prairie Harvest Canada Ltd. Over 40 different sizes and shapes of pasta in plain, egg, spinach and tomato flavours as well as 'specialty pasta' flavours will be made at the company's 15,000 sq. ft. plant, located at 12538 - 126 Street in Edmonton. The plant's production capacity is 10 million pounds of pasta per year and, once all manufacturing lines are operational, will employ 20 full time staff. For further information, contact Carlo Fucchin, chief executive officer for Prairie Harvest Canada Ltd., at (403)454-4004, or Allen Pelletier, industry development officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-2591.

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AGRI-NEWS

November 18, 1996

Careful with the fruits and veggies, too

What would you say is the most serious food safety hazard when it comes to fruits and vegetables? Pesticides? Chemicals from the environment?

"Actually, the real hazard is bacteria," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Bacteria are everywhere. Some of the most deadly strains live in the soil and one of the most toxic of all – **Clostridium botulinum** – is anaerobic. That means that it cannot grow in the presence of oxygen. It does very nicely underground and can very well be on the surface of your root vegetables when you dig them up."

When vegetables are dug up, the bacteria are exposed to oxygen and cannot grow. They cope by forming a spore, which is a sort of hard shell that protects the bacteria in a dormant state until growing conditions are more favourable. Spores are extremely hardy. Although cooking will kill live bacteria, spores are not killed even at boiling temperatures (212°F or 100°C).

"A temperature higher than boiling, 250°F or 120°C, will kill spores," says St. Onge. "You can reach these temperatures only under pressure. That's why it's so important to use a pressure canner for vegetables. If any spores are present in canned vegetables, they will germinate and grow very nicely in the sealed, oxygen-free jars."

It's not the spores or their bacteria that cause illness – it's the toxin produced by the **Cl. botulinum** organism as it grows. This toxin is extremely deadly and can kill you if you even taste food containing it. There is no warning, no off flavour or odour to alert you to the danger.

"The symptoms of botulism are very different from other types of food-borne illnesses. Symptoms, which appear in a day or so, include dizziness, blurred vision, and difficulty breathing," adds St. Onge. "Death can occur as a result of respiratory paralysis.

If the diagnosis is made in time, victims can be placed on respirators to save their lives, but recovery takes months or even years."

It isn't only canned foods that can cause botulism. Foods that have been cooked and then stored in ways that seal off oxygen can cause problems too. Mushrooms, sauteed onions, and baked potatoes stored in the foil they were cooked in, have all been identified as the cause of separate cases of botulism.

"A popular practise these days is to preserve some types of vegetables, such as garlic, at home in jars of oil," adds St. Onge. "This can be dangerous because oil eliminates contact of the garlic with oxygen, and the botulinum organism can grow."

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Careful with the fruits and veggies, too 1
Provincial forage seed market factors 2
A new look and a new name 2
Alberta delegates welcomed at National 4-H Conference 3
Rural leadership surveys sent out 3
Cool October harvest weather 3
4-H Scholarships - investing in the future 4
Briefs 6

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Food being preserved should be either heat processed (canning) or frozen. Food stored in the refrigerator should have contact with oxygen so the spore-forming organisms can't grow.

Many other kinds of bacteria can live and grow on the surfaces of fruits and vegetables. We handle them many times between picking and purchasing, so the same kinds of bacteria that cause "hamburger disease" can be present on fruits and vegetables. If vegetables are cooked the live bacteria will be killed. If you re-contaminate them by careless handling and storage, illness can result from eating them.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.

Safe handling, safe cooking, and safe storage goes a long way in preventing food-borne illness.

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-4367

Provincial forage seed market factors

All the major forage seed prices, with the exception of brome, are above last year's levels and near long-term averages. This is partly due to weather and harvest conditions experienced this year.

"As of the end of October, about 80 per cent of the provincial forage crop was harvested," says Don Hansen, market analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In the Peace River Region, wet conditions made harvest operations very difficult with only about 40 per cent being completed. Producers mainly concentrated on the grain and oilseed crops. There is speculation that a good portion, if not all, of the clovers will be over-wintered."

The prospect of over-wintering this year's production, and other factors, have strengthened prices for the clovers, with a further rally likely in the coming months. Market factors include: Canada's limited inventory, Oregon's reduced production of medium red clover, and a worldwide supply shortage that is providing renewed optimism to those farmers who were able to harvested their crops.

Current price quotes for red clover are near the 70 cents per pound level. If product quality meets strict U.S. quality standards, prices have been quoted over 80 cents per pound. Prospects for alsike harvesting in the Peace River Region are better than red clover, but below average yields and questionable harvest prospects have strengthened markets to near the 45 cents per pound level.

"This year, close to 3,000 additional acres of timothy, originally intended for compacting, is moving into the seed market," says Hansen. "Yields of 400 to 500 pounds per acre means there should be no shortage of timothy seed this winter. Prices are currently hovering near 20 cents per pound for common and 45 cents per pound for certified."

Average to above average yields of brome grass have been reported which, coupled with a large carryover, will curtail prices at the current 40 cents per pound level. Fields which are weedy or older may be worked under, given the prospects.

Although the fescue harvest was completed on schedule, wet fall conditions didn't permit much of the acreage to be worked under. Many expect a fair amount of fescue acres next year. Prices remain stable at the 45 cents per pound level, which is considered very reasonable by U.S. purchasers.

"Increased buying of Kentucky Bluegrass this fall has pushed prices into the high $70's U.S.," adds Hansen. "Many lawn seed mixers are increasing the proportion of Canadian Red Fescue in their mixtures, because of the difference in price."

Contact: Don Hansen
(403)422-3099

A new look and a new name

Free and Easy – a three part extravaganza. The renamed Agricultural Education Institute maintains all of its most popular features while incorporating new learning opportunities for educators.

"The program has major industry participation in the workshops and lecture sessions," says Betty Gabert, Ag in the Classroom coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The program, condensed to three days from the former eight-day commitment, means more participants can be involved. Major components in the program are industry displays, round table discussions, issue workshops, industry workshops, industry tours, the hands-on science lab and the farm stay."

The new format has the endorsement of the major sponsor, UFA Coop. The UFA has shown its support and commitment to teacher education for many years by being actively involved in this program.

Part one, Edu-Fair, will be held in the Education Building, University of Alberta Campus, Thursday, March 13, 1997. Up to 150 students will be able to participate in the workshops.

"The Edu-Fair, always a great learning and awareness building tool, is the mini-expo held on campus at the U of A, says Gabert. "Edu-Fair will be open to all registered Faculty of Education students. Round table discussions, exhibits and workshops on a wide range of topics make this a real participatory event."

The second component to the program, the farm stay and industry tours, will be offered to a group of 30 educators. It will be held May 30 -31, 1997, in the Edmonton and Central Alberta area.

Cont'd on page 3

The third part of the program is open to a limited number of participants who will undertake a research project supervised by a U of A faculty member. This portion of the program is a subsidized University credit option.

"The new format is expected to be very attractive to educators experiencing increased work loads and demands on their time," says Gabert. "The agriculture industry support of Ag education in schools is very appreciated by the organizing committee and participants."

The organizing partners for the event are: Ag in the Classroom; UFA Coop; Continuing Professional Education, Faculty of Education, U of A; with the cooperation from the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry & Home Economics.

For more information, contact Betty Gabert (403)427-4225 in Edmonton.

Contact: Betty Gabert
(403)427-4225

Alberta delegates welcomed at National 4-H Conference

Six 4-H members, chosen for leadership, communication skills and participation in the 4-H community, departed for the National 4-H Conference on November 5.

"At this year's conference in Toronto, delegates will learn about agriculture, participate in discussion sessions, share opinions with leaders and staff and share provincial 4-H information," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Alberta delegates include: Crystal Huculak, Willingdon; Mary-Ann Andrews, Barrhead; Chris Bowman, Onoway; Holly Johanson, Westerose; Joleen Preston, Hanna; and Lars Ormberg, Rimbey.

"Five 4-H Leaders represented Alberta at the National 4-H Volunteer Leaders Conference," says Stark. "This program involves 4-H Leaders from across Canada. It allows participants to strengthen leadership skills, provides opportunities for learning and honours their commitment to the 4-H program."

The five Leaders were: Frances Stewart Davis, Fairview; Marion Van Sluys, Fort Macleod; Lynda Hewson, Delia; Sharon Boorse, St. Paul; and Pat Borduzac, Vimy.

Both conference delegations were honoured at a sendoff banquet sponsored by the Alberta Pool on November 5. The Alberta Pool has been sponsoring the sendoff for National Conference Delegates for almost 50 years.

The 11 Alberta 4-H members and Leaders returned home on November 10.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403) 948-8510

Rural leadership surveys sent out

Randomly selected from south, central and northern Alberta, 1500 agricultural producers and rural community members will be asked to respond to the Alberta LEAD (Leadership Education for Agricultural Development) survey.

"Seven counties and municipal districts were chosen for participation," says June Morgan, Alberta LEAD research officer. "In each area, 214 individuals will receive the survey. These Albertans are being asked to share their opinions on six topics related to the state of leadership in rural Alberta and future leadership developments."

The seven counties and MDs chosen include: County of Vulcan, MD of Acadia, MD of Willow Creek, MD of Starland, MD of Taber, County of Two Hills and MD of Mackenzie.

"Confidentiality in this survey will be strictly maintained," says Morgan. "Press releases are being used to encourage active participation in completing the survey. Individuals completing the survey will receive a copy of the Executive Summary of the final report if they return the summary request form attached to the survey. The research results in the executive summary will be released early in 1997."

Earlier this year, twelve major rural leadership development issues were identified in focus group and individual interviews. These issues include: economic, social and environmental issues, cultural diversity, rapidly changing technology, community readiness to initiate change, food quality and safety, rural influence capabilities, and replenishing leadership capacity.

"Survey responses will also help to identify qualities required by future rural leaders," adds Morgan.

Contact: June Morgan
(403)489-4857

Cool October harvest weather

October was cool in most of Alberta. The cool temperatures combined with snow and rain slowed drying of crops and delayed harvest and fall field work.

"The provincial average temperature was 1.6 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 5.1° C," says Peter Dzikowski, agri weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Most Alberta locations reported temperatures one to three degrees below normal."

October began with below normal temperatures after a late September snow storm. The warm weather returned October 3, providing about seven to 10 days of good harvest weather. During the third week of October, cool wet weather returned

Cont'd on page 4

to most of Alberta. Temperatures were one to four degrees below normal for the rest of the month.

"October is usually the fourth driest month of the year," says Dzikowski. "This fall, snow storms contributed most of the October precipitation."

The provincial average precipitation was 2.9 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 19.5 mm. These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Lethbridge reported the greatest precipitation total for October, 50 mm, 314 per cent of normal. Lacombe was also wet, reporting 36.4 mm or 217 per cent of normal.

The driest region in Alberta was the northwest region, where amounts of two to 22 mm, or 10 to 80 per cent of normal, were reported. The northeast and southern regions also reported below normal precipitation. Central and Peace regions reported near normal to above normal precipitation.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

4-H Scholarships – investing in the future

Each year numerous sponsors invest in the futures of young Albertans through the Alberta 4-H Scholarship Program. This year 81 outstanding past and present 4-H members were awarded scholarships for the 1996-97 academic year. The total in monies granted was more than $48,000.

"More than 260 applications were submitted to the Provincial 4-H Office," says Kyla Makowecki, 4-H scholarship coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The quality of the applications was exceptional, resulting in a high standard of competition. Each application was marked based on involvement in the 4-H Program, contribution to the community, leadership abilities, academic achievements and criteria recommended by sponsors."

In 1996, the Alberta 4-H Scholarship Program not only invested in the future, it moved into it. Using the technological advances of the Internet, scholarship applications could be down loaded from the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development web site at:

http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4h

The easiest way to access the 1997-98 Scholarship Program application form will be to down load it from the Alberta 4-H web site in early March 1997. A limited number of applications will be available from club leaders. The deadline for typed, completed applications is May 15, 1997.

"The Canadian Wheat Board sponsored a $1000 scholarship, awarded for the first time in 1996," says Makowecki. "Sponsors involved with the Alberta 4-H Scholarship Program make a positive impact on a 4-Her's educational career. We invite community-minded individuals, organizations and companies to participate in the 4-H Scholarship program."

Contact: Home Economics and 4-H Branch
(403) 422-4H4H (Government numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000)

1996-97 Alberta 4-H Scholarship Recipients

A & E Cappelle LN Herefords Scholarship – *approximately $175*
Vernon Pederson - Barrhead

AgrEvo Canada Inc. Bursary – *$500*
Nicole Long - Irma

Alberta Cattle Commission Scholarship – *$500 each*
Becky Mitchell - Kitscoty
Kurtis Hewson - Delia

Alberta Dairy Association - *$500 each*
Curtis Perry - Cornonation
Colin Strauss - Edmonton
Ryan Ronald - Ponoka

Alberta Ford and Mercury Dealer Scholarship – $1000 each
Barbara Mitchell - Berwyn
Paul Franz - Didsbury
Victor Quast - Westerose
Cherie McGowan - Killam
Mary-Ann Andrews - Barrhead
Christopher Boorse - St. Paul
Heather Mitchell - Pincher Creek

Alberta Salers Association Scholarship – *$500*
Tracy Johnston - Calgary

Alberta Treasury Branches – *$1000 each*
Chella Barott - Vulcan
Brock Miller - Dalemead
Leslie Wagner - Lacombe
Christina Nodder - Drumheller
Karla Huber - Sunset House
Carrie Cholak - Lamont
Suzanne DesRochers - Ardrossan

Alberta Pool (1st Year) – *$500 each*
Alison Gabert - Edberg
Crystal Huculak - Willingdon

Alberta Pool (2nd Year) – *$500 each*
Joanna Ramsum - Atmore
Kimberly Fowler - Airdrie

Blue Klein Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Andrea Dear - Wetaskiwin

Calgary 4-H Alumni Scholarship – *$300*
Mark Shand - Cremona

The Canadian Wheat Board Scholarship – *$1000*
Dalyce Russill - Elkwater

The Co-operators Scholarship – *$1000*
Shari Bagozzi - Vulcan

Dairyworld Foods Scholarship – *$500*
Linsey Chalack - Innisfail

Dana Misick Memorial Scholarship – *$500*
Amy Wisniewski - Hairy Hill

Dixon Shield Memorial Scholarship – *$350*
Darcy Roberts - Barrhead

Don Matthews Scholarship – *$500*
Becky Tillotson - Innisfree

Edith Taylor Memorial Scholarship – *$475*
Benjamin Meuser - Wanham

Farm Credit Corporation Regional Scholarship – *$300 each*
Jennifer Hudec - Bow Island
Lars Ormberg - Rimbey
Susan Wacowich - Redwater
Joy Lowen - High Level
Grant Sanden - Strathmore
Jill Russell - Drumheller
Kathi McCarty - Vegreville

Farm Credit Corporation 4-H Scholarship Awards Program – *$1000 each*
Randy Andrashewski -Willingdon
Shelly Marshman - Rockyford

4-H Foundation of Alberta – *$375*
Candice Hueppelsheuser - Blackfalds

George Pimm Memorial – *$400*
Nyla Kristensen - Dixonville

Glen Bodell Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Shelley Andrews - Sherwood Park

Inga Marr Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Dana Vos - Burdett

Ken Edgerton Memorial Scholarship – *$425*
Joni - Lee Herr - Valleyview

Lilydale Poultry Scholarship – *$800*
Shane Menzak - Ranfurly

Marilyn Sue Lloyd Memorial – *$300*
Staci Saruga - Alliance

Minburn Wild Rose Scholarship – *$200*
Amber Smart - Mannville

Norma Jean Gray – *$1000 each*
Nathan Eshpeter - Daysland
Kari Rustad - Minburn
Jennifer Lawrence - Clandonald
Ronda Dick - Lousana
Naomi Carter - Innisfree

Pennington Memorial Scholarship – *approximately $500 each*
Bryan Penno - Barrhead
Tara Jennings - Barrhead

Ralph Cossey Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Janice Feenstra - Vermilion

Robert Sherwood Memorial Scholarship – *$550*
Kimberley Denis - Lacombe

Thomas Caryk Memorial Scholarship – *approximately $300*
Tanya Froh - DeBolt

TX Bar (1) – *$1000*
Jayson Van Sluys - Fort Macleod

TX Bar (2) – *$500*
Gayle Luca - Foremost

TX Bar (3) – *$400*
Carla Schlenker - Dunmore

United Farmers of Alberta –*$1000 each*
Connie Jacula - Vermilion
Wade Meunier - Barrhead

United Grain Growers Limited – *$500*
Maureen Mappin - Byemoor

Vermilion River 4-H District Scholarship – *$200*
Wendy Williams - Gibbons

Walter Lipkewich Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Laura Holt - Lloydminster

Wetaskiwin District 4-H Scholarship – *approximately $500 each*
Holly Johanson - Westerose
Shannon Frederickson - Gwynne
Colleen Angus - Wetaskiwin

Wheat Board Surplus Monies Trust – *$400 each*
Thera Fox - Hill Spring
Kerri Solick - Lacombe
Jody Wacowich - Redwater
Nadawn Toews - Fort Vermilion
Karen Bussey - Airdrie
Julie Hadwin - Consort
Lori Konieczny - Innisfree

Woodgrove Unifarm Local Scholarship – *$300*
Nicol Stone - Wetaskiwin

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Agri-News Briefs

Launching a new business venture

Before 'hitting the streets', try out the idea in a workshop setting. A new pilot program, using the clinic approach of the MBA program at the University of Calgary, has been set up to allow entrepreneurs work through the transitional phases of starting a new business. The pilot is a three-module course and can accommodate 12 to 15 students working on individual business ventures. Module one runs from December 11 to 13, 1996; module two is scheduled for February 20 and 21, 1997; and, module three is on March 14, 1997. The course is being held at the Centre for New Venture Development, Calgary, in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For further information, contact Doug Barlund at (403)556-4245 in Olds.

Versatility in livestock feeding systems and feed storage

Some of the practical and efficient uses of concrete will be demonstrated during the 6th annual D & M Silo tour. The one-day bus tour on November 29 will stop at farms and ranches where examples of precast concrete products are being used. Bunker silos, gang slats in cattle handling and feeding areas, cattle waterers and several styles of feed bunks will be demonstrated. The tour starts at the D & M concrete plant, four miles west and one mile north of Lacombe, at 8:30 a.m. Following a plant tour, buses will take participants to several sites in the Red Deer region. The tour is open to all interested cattle producers, both beef and dairy. Please confirm attendance by contacting Jim Siemens at 1-800-399-0741 or, (403)782-2122 in Lacombe, before November 27.

Plant diseases tops the information request list

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has an extensive web site on the Internet which provides information at the click of your 'mouse' on a myriad of agricultural and ag related topics. Over the last three months, the topic area 'hit' the most was plant diseases, with over 7,507 visits. Whether you need to know more about insects, parasites, pesticides, weeds, plant diseases, weather, coming agricultural events, or you just want to look up current market prices, come surf the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development site. Our Internet address is: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**

Daily calcium needs

Bone density, usually established by age 35, is an important control measure against osteoporosis and bone fractures later in life. Up to 45 per cent of total bone mass is formed during adolescence. Calcium is also critical for blood clotting, nerve transmission and muscle contraction. Due to increased muscle and skeletal growth, teenage males have an even higher calcium need than females. Health Canada has established daily calcium needs of 1100 mg for teenage boys (13-15) and 1000 mg for girls of the same age. Dairy products are the richest sources of calcium. While trendy diets often reject dairy products, teens realize that healthy eating is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Cheeses, yogurts and skim milk are food alternatives that can be suggested to teens to ensure they are getting the calcium they need. For further information, contact Suzanne Tenold, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)948-8504.

Alberta Bison Association

Bison producers from across Alberta voted to rename their organization, formerly called the Southern Alberta Bison Association, to reflect the growth of their industry. The Alberta Bison Association (ABA) now has 200 members located in many areas of the province. The ABA is working to build awareness of the industry, promote the nutritional benefits of bison meat, and create a demand for the product. There almost 700 producers and 35,000 bison in private herds in Canada. Industry growth is estimated at 25 per cent annually. It is expected there will be approximately 100,000 bison in Canada the turn of the century. For more information, contact the Alberta Bison Association at 1-800-683-6747.

#6 with a bullet

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development ranked sixth in Canada's Ten Best Government Web Sites. Complete with mention in Government Computer Magazine, Ropin' the Web (Alberta's Ag site) is in some prestigious company. The top 10 sites, in reverse order as Letterman would do it, are:
#10 – NSTL/SIPSS NMSO Benchmark Report; #9 – Canada Post Corporation; #8 – Parks Canada; #7 – National Archives;
#6 – **Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development** (htt://www.agric.gov.ab.ca) #5 – Ghosts of the Gold Rush, Yukon Tourism; #4 – Strategies, Industry Canada;
#3 – Rescol canadien - Canada School Net;
#2 – The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto; and,
#1 – Prince Edward Island Information Centre.

AGRI-NEWS

November 25, 1996

A passion for prairie

On November 30, 1996, the Discovery Channel is airing a film shot in southern Alberta. Award winning film-makers, John and Janet Foster spent a month in the province filming *A Passion for Prairie*. Check local listings for exact time of airing.

"The film celebrates the link between cattle ranching and the protection of prairie ecosystems," says Barry Adams, regional manager of southern range management with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It's an affirmation of land stewardship that focuses on past preservation of the original prairie and on future protection and stewardship needs. The unique diversity of plants and animals on the prairies and the important role of ranchers and farmers are strongly shown and supported."

The McIntyre Ranch, a 100 square mile property located between Lethbridge and the U.S. border owned by the Thrall family, is featured in the film. During the month-long project, the Fosters spent six days with staff from the Public Lands Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and from Alberta Environmental Protection.

"The film includes a helicopter trip with Terry Hood, land resource agrologist, into the Milk River Canyon and a visit to a spring pasture with Nancy Boutillier, land resource agrologist," says Adams. "A visit with Agriculture staff to a Stockmen's Course near Pincher Creek is used to demonstrate some of the measures being taken to help landowners incorporate sound land management in the province."

John and Janet Foster have been making nature films for over 20 years. Some of their past film credits include *To the Wild Country* and *Wild Canada*. More recently, they have produced a number of award winning specials for TV Ontario called *Clayoquot - the Sound of Wonder* and *The Bay of Fundy*.

Contact: Barry Adams
(403)381-5486

Poinsettia care

Christmas is only one month away. It's a time of surprises and a time of age-old traditions like the Christmas tree, turkey, mistletoe and, of course, poinsettia.

"The poinsettia, a plant native of Mexico, was introduced into the U.S. in 1895 by Joel Poinsett," says Shelley Barkley, horticulture information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Since then, the plant has gone through endless breeding programs. As a result you can get poinsettia with not only the showy red-coloured bracts, but pink, cream and red and white variegated varieties. Red is still the most popular, making up 74 per cent of the 1995 crop, world wide."

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

A passion for prairie 1
Poinsettia care 1
Order your shelterbelt trees now 2
New open marketing system for Alberta hog producers 2
How functional foods work 3
Leadership survey helps your community 3
Peas for seed 4
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Moving live plants on cold, winter days can be tricky. A little planning will make the trip less traumatic for you and the plant. Make the plant shop the last stop before going home and be sure the vehicle is warm. Paper wrapping is a better insulator than plastic. The worst spot for the plant is on the floor in front of the heater vent as it can cook there. Move the plant from the car to its spot in the home quickly. Unwrap the plant as soon as possible, leaving it in the sleeve too long will cause the leaves and bracts to remain pointed upwards.

"Pick a spot in the home for the poinsettia with care," adds Barkley. "Remember that they thrive in bright, direct light in the winter. Low light levels will cause the leaves to yellow and drop. The average home temperature, between 15 and 21°C, is fine, but hot spots directly in front of heat vents or on the T.V., can make the whole plant droop. Drafty spots, like window sills, are not recommended. Plants on window sills can freeze if the curtain is closed."

Water poinsettia when the soil is dry to the touch, never let it dry out completely. Plants that are too dry have shrivelled leaves. Water thoroughly and allow excess water to drain from the pot, then dump the drip tray. The decorative foil around the pot holds water so remove the foil or put holes through it at the pot's drainage holes. This prevents the soil from staying too wet. Soil kept too wet causes the colour to fade in patches on the bracts and leaves.

"A few simple precautions and some common sense care will be rewarded with healthy, colourful plants that grace your festive decor," says Barkley.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-1305

Order your shelterbelt trees now

There are 25 varieties of trees and shrubs available for farmstead shelterbelts this year and the quality is excellent.

"There are still good quantities of most trees and shrubs available for both farm and field shelterbelts," says Brendan Casement, agroforestry program leader with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It's a good idea to order early to ensure that you can still get the trees and shrubs needed to complete your shelterbelt."

Now that the first snow has fallen and drifts have formed, it's possible to see where shelterbelts could be planted to reduce those unwanted drifts. Properly placed shelterbelts can reduce the snow falling on driveways and around buildings, or can cause snow to drop in areas that drain into dugouts.

"A dense shelterbelt, such as caragana and spruce, will cause snow drifts to form downwind to a distance of about twice their height," says Casement. "More open trees, such as green ash and larch, have enough porosity to deposit the snow in a blanket over a much larger area, capturing additional moisture for crops."

Orders for both farmstead shelterbelts (priced) and conservation plantings(no charge) for spring are being accepted until March 1, 1997. There is an application fee of $25 (plus GST) that covers both. Order forms can be picked up from local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Agriculture Service Boards or PFRA offices.

Conservation trees from PFRA are available free, however, there is a $25 application fee. They are ordered on the same form as the farmstead trees. Be sure to read the instruction page on the application carefully to see if you qualify for the free trees.

This is the last year shelterbelt trees can be ordered directly from Alberta Agriculture.

Contact: Brendan Casement
(403)422-1789

New open marketing system for Alberta hog producers

The Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation (APPDC) will begin a new era of marketing. The single desk hog marketing system used since 1969 will be replaced with the implementation of open marketing.

"The Corporation's Board of Directors is to be commended for working with all aspects of the industry to bring about the new marketing system," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD).

The implementation of open marketing follows extensive industry consultation. Earlier this spring, the APPDC promised producers a vote to determine the future of marketing. Paszkowski agreed that a vote will take place within a two-year trial period for open marketing to ensure the new system is the right one for both producers and packers.

"The Corporation is committed to being the marketer of choice for hog producers in Alberta," said Roger Charbonneau, Chairman of the APPDC. "We will continue to offer a full range of services through the newly formed Marketing Division."

"The APPDC will also collect a universal service charge to fund activities such as pork research, promotions, lobbying efforts and industry development," said Paszkowski. "This levy will be collected on all hogs for slaughter, regardless of how they're sold or bought."

"The $1.00 service charge, the lowest levy of its kind in Canada, will only fund the universal programs," commented Charbonneau. "The service charge will not be used to fund the Marketing Division."

The regulations for the implementation of the open marketing system and the universal service charge will be finalized. The regulations will take effect December 2, 1996. A committee

Cont'd on page 3

with government and industry representation will be struck to monitor the progress of the open marketing system.

"The new open marketing system will allow producers to choose how to market their product - through the APPDC, to an agent, direct to a packer or for export to world markets," added Paszkowski. "I am pleased with the leadership role the APPDC Board has taken in ensuring producers are able to service the growing demand for our province's excellent pork."

Contact:	*Ron Glen/Brian Hlus* *(403) 427-2137*	*Brian Rhiness* *(403) 427-2164*
	Roger Charbonneau *(403) 474-8288*	*Ed Schultz* *(403) 474-8288*

How functional foods work

Nutraceuticals, functional foods, phytochemicals are some new nutrition terms you may have noticed being used in news reports and in consumer magazines. The terms are based on certain components which have always been in the foods we eat, but have been isolated and given technical names.

"Chemically, many components in different foods can be identified and it's possible to determine particular links they have to specific body needs and disease prevention," says Suzanne Tenold, foods and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A food may have the nutritional value expected, but one or more of its nutrients may prove to be a bonus because research can link it directly to a health advantage. Indoles, for example, found in broccoli and other similar vegetables or allyl sulfides, found in onions and garlic, can enhance enzymes made by the body to battle some diseases."

These compounds are called phytochemicals by researchers and are commonly called nutraceuticals by food technologists. Familiar examples include flour fortified with iron, milk fortified with vitamin D, and products with bran added to increase fibre content.

"Technology today can isolate some of these specific compounds and actually introduce them into other foods," says Tenold. "Foods that are popular among certain segments of the population can be fortified to supply additional nutritional value. That's one of the reasons we see more supplements added to foods. Calcium enriched juices are becoming increasingly popular, especially among children and teens. It's important to remember that these foods are meant to supplement not replace other foods, such as dairy products."

Enhancing the development of already existing phytochemicals, such as soluble fibre in beans, folic acid in green leafy vegetables or vitamin C in vegetables, could result in 'super food'. These fit into the functional food or pharmafood category.

The market for nutraceuticals, super foods, is growing worldwide. Approximately 50 per cent of the U.S. food market fits this category and the industry is worth over $250 billion. The demand in Europe and the Pacific Rim is double that. Nutraceuticals constitute a $4 billion market in Japan and play a major role in that country's health revolution.

"With the demand for healthy food and a healthy food supply growing, the benefits of functional foods have been extensively publicized and interest in the products has increased," says Tenold. "The concern and potential danger lies in the false sense of security that could develop in consumers. Foods promoted on the basis of isolated components, or as supplements should not take precedence over choosing and eating foods recommended in Canada's Food Guide. Malnutrition and compromised health can result when supplements are chosen at the expense of a proper, balanced diet."

The complexity of food is still not understood completely. Nutritionist and dietitians continue to encourage people to eat a variety of foods each day. Reading labels and asking reliable health professionals about products will help consumers understand how some of the new foods can support, not replace healthy diet.

Contact: *Suzanne Tenold*
(403)948-8504

Leadership survey helps your community

In mid-November, 1,500 agricultural producers and rural community members received the Future Leadership Needs Survey. The deadline for returning the survey is November 29, 1996.

"Knowing what Albertans think will help shape leadership training to meet the needs of rural communities," says John Melicher, executive director of the Rural Education & Development Association (REDA). "The information received in the survey will be used to prepare leaders in rural Alberta meet the leadership demands facing the agriculture industry and rural communities into the 21st century."

Leadership programmers will use the survey results to identify topics where training can address community based issues. Training will be designed to deal with the priority issues identified. Also, leadership training based on learner needs will help community leaders understand the 'big picture' of agriculture in the global economy and learn how to plan and take appropriate action.

"Survey recipients were selected randomly from seven counties and municipal districts in the province," says June Morgan, research director for the project. "Albertans are asked to

Cont'd on page 4

complete and return the survey by November 29 so that the task of compiling the data can be done."

Focus group participants from southern, central and northern Alberta are encouraged to organize their own discussion groups using the survey results. These discussion groups would provide a province wide perspective on their original comments made during the April focus group interviews. Assistance in organizing these discussion groups may be available from organizational development specialists from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

To determine if a discussion groups will be occurring in your area, southern Alberta residents can contact Maureen Bolen, Strathmore (403)934-3355; central Alberta residents can contact Carmen Andrew, Stettler (403)742-7500; and, northern Alberta residents can contact Susan Meyer, Grande Prairie(403)538-5285.

The results of this research will be presented by June Morgan for discussion at a leadership development conference scheduled for September, 1997. For further information on the upcoming conference, contact Richard Stringham at REDA (403)451-5959 in Edmonton. To request a copy of the executive summary of the research, contact John Melicher at REDA (403)451-5959.

Contact: *June Morgan* *Richard Stringham*
(403)489-4857 *(403)451-5959*

Peas for seed

Harvest is done and the pea crop was good. If you want to keep some seed back for next year, there are a few things that can be done to guarantee a good seed pea.

"The first thing is to handle peas early," says Beata Lees, special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "First time growers often cause trouble for themselves at this point. Don't wait for down time over winter, clean and handle peas as early as possible."

Peas are a large seed and are prone to splitting and cracking during handling. Even small microscopic cracks can impact emergence the following season. Handling peas in the fall, when the moisture content is still high makes the pea seed less brittle.

"Peas have to be handled gently," adds Lees. "To help reduce the amount of cracking, slow auger speed and avoid large drops into bins or trucks."

Studies show that handling peas and other large seeded crops in cold weather significantly increases cracking and splitting. Damage to seed also increases as moisture content of peas goes below 14 per cent. Seed variety is a factor to consider also. Varieties with a thinner seed coat, such as Express, are more susceptible to mechanical damage.

Idealy, peas could be threshed out starting at 20 per cent moisture. Peas will store safely at 16 per cent moisture. Storing seeds at too high a temperature can also impact germination. Aeration, a slow cooling process, is often the best way to cool down peas. Don't heat over 43°C if keeping peas for seed.

"Producers should only use seed from disease-free fields and always do a germination test on seed after cleaning and handling," says Lees. "This testing will help determine if the seed was damaged and to what extent. Poor quality seed is also prone to seed rot. Keep in mind, certified seed is still the best bet."

Contact: *Beata Lees*
(403)381-5237

Agri-News Briefs

Costs and returns of Saskatoon berry production

A costs and returns report on a 10 acre Saskatoon berry production business has been completed. The report, prepared by George Monner and Nabi Chaudhary of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, outlines the investment cost needed to establish a 10 acre orchard and details revenue and costs for production years 1 to 10. The numbers in the report were determined by interviewing producers and their actual revenue and costs, they are not based on estimates. Copies of this publication are available by contacting the publications office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at 1-800-292-5697or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Economics of honey production

Honey production in Alberta has fluctuated widely over the past decades. The number of beekeepers has ranged from a high of 2,000 in 1975 to a low of 750 in 1995. While the number of apiarists has steadily declined, the number of colonies has risen almost steadily. Production levels have remained constant even though the number of individual beekeepers in the province has decreased. To get a handle on what the numbers indicate, a study was completed this year on the production costs and returns for beekeepers in Alberta and on how the size of an operation affects net returns. The study also details regional differences throughout the province and provides a current economic report for the industry. Copies of The Economics of Honey Production are available from the publications office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. To receive a copy, call 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

SPCA's 1996 Farmers of the Year

The SPCA has named two recipients for the 1996 Farmer of the Year Award. **Hazel George**, cattle rancher and grain farmer near Airdrie, was awarded this honour for her many humane practices when dealing with the animals under her care. She raises show-quality Charolais cattle, and uses horses and dogs to check on and bring in the cattle. The farm is complete with several cats (all spay or neutered) whose main duties are to keep the mouse population in check. **Jerry and Sandra Kitt** are the other recipients of the 1996 Award. They operate a large organic farm west of Grande Prairie. They currently have wild turkeys, cattle and bison on their farm. From an idea of free-range poultry, the Kitts developed a 3000 turkey operation. The safe, natural environments used to raise the turkeys are followed-up with stress reducing techniques during transportation. The Kitts care for their other farm animals with as much consideration and are also active in pursuing farm practices that benefit the environment. Congratulations to this year's winners. For further information, contact John Janzen, education coordinator for the Alberta SPCA at (403)447-3600.

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AGRI-NEWS

December 2, 1996

Down by the water

When you look at the strip of land bordering a creek, river, lake, even a slough, what do you see? Is it well covered with trees, shrubs, grasses and other plant growth?

"The area down by the water's edge is called the riparian zone," says Barry Adams, regional manager of southern range management with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "What is growing in the riparian zone is a clear indication of the health of this crucial but all too fragile area."

Healthy riparian areas have many beneficial features besides supporting plants and trees. They are a buffer strip between the water and the land. They trap sediments, nutrients, chemicals and animal wastes. When functioning properly, they help reduce algae blooms and keep water quality at an optimum for fish, wildlife and human use.

"Regulating water flow is one of the benefits of a well vegetated riparian zone," says Adams. "As well as preventing erosion of the streambank, the riparian buffer can slow flood waters and reduce the chance of downstream flash flooding. Proper ground water recharge is also dependant on this small but very important part of streams, creeks and rivers."

Proper management of riparian areas means taking the time to really understand how a riparian area functions and what can be done to ensure its continued health. Sound land, grazing and water management work hand in hand to keep the area thriving.

"Decades of research has gone into identifying the value of riparian zones," adds Adams. "These areas are different than uplands and have specific management needs. A guide, *Caring for the Green Zone*, was prepared to provide a basic understanding of these important areas."

The guide outlines issues surrounding riparian zone maintenance. Management practices and suggestions are included to help landowners maintain and enhance the riparian area on their land.

"Part of the process in maintaining riparian health is following the progress and charting the changes of the area over several years," says Adams. "Keeping a health record goes a long way in identifying problem areas, noting areas of success and pin-pointing management options of benefit in a given area. A riparian health guide that helps livestock producers examine the condition of their stream or river banks is available from Agriculture."

Another riparian management tool landowners may want to pick up is a twenty minute video, Along the Water's Edge. It is available from the Cows and Fish partners at a cost of $7.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development resource people are available if landowners need help in identifying riparian problems or interpreting characteristics of a riparian area. Should a problem be detected, they can provide grazing and management tips to help the area recover as quickly as possible.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Down by the water 1
Performance horse registry 2
Canada-Chile Bilateral Free Trade Agreement 2
Standing crops and recreation enthusiasts 2
Dining in, opportunities for processors 3
Networking to promote your B & B 3
Briefs 4
Coming Agricultural Events 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Publishing Branch

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Caring for the Land and the Riparian Health Guide can be picked up at local Agriculture offices, or ordered by phoning 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Contact: *Barry Adams at (403)381-5486*
Greg Hale – Provincial Cows and Fish Coordinator at (403)381-5281

Performance horse registry

Historically, the Jockey Club was only interested in registering Thoroughbreds for racing. Recently, the club expanded their scope and set up the Performance Horse Registry (PHR).

"Changing interests have created changing demands in the horse market," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Those changes resulted in the need for a registry for Thoroughbreds and part breds that recognize other activities besides racing."

Ned Bonnie, chairman of the PHR and member of the Jockey Club Board, is one of the featured speakers at the *1997 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference*.

"Once registered with the PHR, each horse's pedigree and achievements become a permanent entry in the PHR database," says Burwash. "Breeders and owners know how expensive breeding and purchasing a performance horse can be. Using this data base, informed purchasing and breeding decisions can be made based on pedigrees proven successful in different performance disciplines, such as show jumping and eventing."

Bonnie is one of 14 internationally recognized speakers making presentations at the conference.

The program for the annual conference follows four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants don't have to limit attendance to only one stream and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532.

Canada-Chile Bilateral Free Trade Agreement

A new Canada-Chile free trade agreement (FTA) gives Canada preferred access to the Chilean market for a number of agricultural commodities.

"The Agreement, which will be implemented in June 1997, gives Canada comparable, and in many cases better, access to Chile than the U.S., the European Union, and Argentina," says Christine Anderson of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's policy secretariat.

In 1995, Alberta exported $12.4 million worth of wheat, barley, peas, pork, beef and lentils to Chile. Wheat accounted for 85 per cent of that total.

"The preferential access provided in the new agreement opens a door for significant increases in two-way trade between Canada and Chile", says Anderson. "The new agreement allows immediate duty free access for durum wheat (from April to November), barley, lentils, beans, canary seed, seed potatoes, and malt as well as for significant quantities of beef, pork, and canola oil."

Tariffs on processed products such as frozen vegetables, baked goods, pasta, soups and pet food will be reduced to zero over the next five years. The tariff on frozen french fries will be reduced over 10 years.

When U.S. president Bill Clinton didn't get fast-track negotiating authority to include Chile in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in early 1996, Canada and Chile pursued their own bilateral negotiation to bridge the time until Chile could accede to the NAFTA. Since his re-election, Clinton has indicated that he intends to put priority on bringing Chile into NAFTA and on pursuing Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Contact: *Christine Anderson*
(403) 422-2231

Standing crops and recreation enthusiasts

Hunters, snowmobile operators and 4X4 users are being asked to check for standing or down crop before entering farm land. These crops are valuable and recreationists are being asked to be extra careful this year.

"Many farmers, especially in northern Alberta have had to leave crops out because of poor harvest weather this fall," says Allan Macaulay, forage crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With all the snow the province is getting already, there may soon be no visible sign of the crop."

Hunters, driving over swaths to retrieve downed animals, snowmobiles and 4X4s can all do considerable damage to crops. Driving over swaths can push them into the ground making it impossible for landowners to pick these crops up in the spring. Grain peas and canola can be shattered, at serious loss to the producer.

"The conditions being experienced this winter could result in making or breaking relationships between landowners and recreation enthusiasts," adds Macaulay. "Producers need to be

Cont'd on page 3

able to get their crops off in the spring. Even cross-country skiing on fields could make pick-up impossible. It is always the best policy to ask landowner permission before entering fields."

The 1996 harvest is proving to be tough and costly, and it's not over yet.

Contact: *Allan Macaulay*
(403)674-8213

Dining in, opportunities for processors

Eating in tonight? It's right in style. Busy schedules and busy lives have resulted in a return to some of the simpler, slower paced, homey activities.

"This trend is something food processors need to pay attention to," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Statistics show that North Americans, nostalgic for family life, are trying to stay home and eat dinner together more frequently. To make sure there is a variety of tasty, convenient foods for Alberta consumers to choose from, processors need to know their market and keep up with changes in consumer demands."

Meal preparation and planning have become easier and faster. On average, it takes only 30 minutes to whip up dinner. Home cooking, with the help of easy to prepare, just add your own meat and vegetables, type of products is taking the toil out of cooking and halving the time spent over the stove. Salad in a bag and other fresh cut products make fruits and vegetables easier to serve.

"Advances in cooking utensils and gadgets are making homemade meals more of a snap," says Lencucha. "Millions of bread machines have sold since they first hit the market. That, in turn, prompted the onslaught of bread machine mixes to make the time-saving convenience even more convenient, quicker and easier."

While the whole home-cooked dinner experience is enjoying a resurgence of popularity, the nature of the meal has definitely changed significantly.

"Whether the meals are made entirely from scratch or not, home cooked meals are a family habit on the rise again," adds Lencucha. "Take-out items are still being picked up but are often used as not the meal itself but a part of the meal. A store-bought entre, Veal Parmesan for example, can be picked up on the drive from work and be nicely complemented by side dishes prepared by someone at home. This saves time, adds variety and lets families rekindle family values by eating together."

For processors this means opportunities. For information on developing a food processing business, contact your local rural development business specialist or agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Joyce Lencucha*
(403)340-5358

Networking to promote your B & B

Bed and breakfast operations are increasing in popularity as travellers and tourists choose alternative accommodation over standard hotels or motels.

"Bed and breakfasts generally offer a less expensive, informal, 'homey' kind of overnight stay than conventional tourist accommodation," says Sharon Homeniuk, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As market opportunity for B&B business ventures grow, it becomes increasingly important that the operator let the travelling public know they exist. Promoting your B&B and its unique features is essential."

Potential customers can only plan to stay at a B&B if they know where it is and how it fits into their travel plans and tastes. There are some creative solutions to promoting and advertising an operation while keeping costs down.

"One of the first things an operator should do is make sure their B&B is listed in local and provincial B&B directories and in local travel and entertainment directories," says Homeniuk. "Promoting your operation to universities and businesses by offering get-away experiences for faculty, visiting professors and special guests can open up a whole new area in the 'over-night' market."

Other inexpensive and effective promotional methods include:

- leaving business cards and brochures, with map if possible, at local motels or campgrounds so they can refer guests when unable to accommodate them;
- making your operation known to special events organizers who plan homecomings, horse shows, fairs and festivals. Let them know you're open for business;
- supplying local tourist centres with information on your B&B and making sure that the brochure is up to date;
- making arrangements with local media, giving special 'weekend get-away for two' to your B&B as contest prizes either on a joint sponsor basis or for a set amount of air time publicity; and
- exchanging information and brochures with other B&B operations in the area to provide alternative accommodation for any unexpected surplus of guests.

"Pooling resources with other businesses to organize package offers that allow several businesses to share promotional costs is also very efficient and it gives operators the chance to offer special features that can attract guests," adds Homeniuk. "Combining a hot air balloon ride or dinner at a local restaurant with accommodations at your B&B make attractive get-away packages."

There are many ways to increase awareness of an operation. With a little imagination and a little attention to visibility, the unique features of a bed and breakfast can spell success.

Contact: Sharon Homeniuk
(403)963-6101

Agri-News Briefs

Alternative straw use industry

After soil conservation and livestock needs are satisfied, it's estimated that a million tonnes of wheat straw are available for alternative uses in an average year in Alberta. A newly released AgVentures factsheet highlights some new industrial uses for straw that are being explored. Considerable attention is being given to using straw as a replacement for wood fibre in paper and panel board products. Opportunities for agripulp to gain a greater market share are on the rise. About 10 per cent of the flax straw produced is currently used for fine paper production. Industry highlights, market basics, production and economic factors are discussed in the *Alternative Straw Use Industry* factsheet, Agdex #110/830-1. Copies are available at local Agriculture offices or by contacting the publications office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. To contact by phone, dial toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Replacement parts for the obsolete farm implement

From post-hole auger, seeder, sprayer or tractor parts, when you need a part that's hard, or impossible, to find check the *Obsolete or Hard to Locate Repair/Replacement Parts Source* before you give up. The information in this publication is compiled by the Alberta Farm Implement Act Administration. Copies can be obtained through the Farmers' Advocate Office at #305, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or by phoning (403)427-2188. The publication is also on the Internet on the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development home page in the General Store. The Internet address is: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/store/index.html**

Essential oils industry

Primary markets for essential oils include soft drink, food and perfume companies. A new addition to the AgVentures factsheets, produced by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, focuses on this emerging industry. Information on which essential oil crops can be grown in western Canada, market and niche market possibilities, and financial and production basics is included. The use of herbs in foods and medicines is controlled by the Health Protection Branch of Health and Welfare Canada, a section on the regulations governing this industry is also included. *Essential Oils Industry*, Agdex #188/830-1, is available at local Agriculture offices, by contacting the publications branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Coming agricultural events

Reduced Tillage Conference – Weed Control for Dryland Rotations
Cypress Center, Exhibition Grounds
Medicine Hat, December 3
Registration: Dave Spencer (403)526-3616, Medicine Hat
Display Coordinator: Doug Henderson (403)526-2888, Dunmore
Facilities: Don McLennan (403)526-2429, Medicine Hat
SACA Vice President: Oriville Yanke (403)527-0145, Medicine Hat

Make it Happen Seminar
Stony Plain Provincial Building
Stony Plain, December 3
Kerry Engel (403)349-4465, Westlock or Sharon Homeniuk (403)963-6101, Stony Plain

Flax: The Next Decade
The Lombard Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 3-4
Flax Council of Canada: (204)982-2115

Innovations in Irrigated Crop Production
Taber Community Centre
Taber, December 4
Rob Dunn (403)381-5119, Lethbridge; Roger Hohm or Jack Payne (403)223-7908, Taber

Alberta Blonde d'Aquitaine Association Annual General Meeting
Leduc Inn
Leduc, December 7
Sarah Konschuh (403)335-4368, Didsbury

Western Canadian Grazing Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer December 9-11
Lorene Cunningham (403)443-7544, Three Hills

Herb Marketing Workshop
Olds College
Olds, December 9-10
Geraldine Bryne (403)556-8254, Olds

Outlook Agri-Food'97
College Inn
Guelph, Ontario, December 10
George Morris Centre 1-800-338-7506

Outlook Agri-Food'97
Sheraton Cavelier
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, December 12
George Morris Centre 1-800-338-7506

Outlook Agri-Food'97
Regional Exhibition Centre
Camrose, December 13
George Morris Centre 1-800-338-7506

Canola - A Golden Future, Canola Days
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, January 8-9, 1997
Contact: 1-800-690-5788

Canadian Alfalfa Seed Conference
Banff Park Lodge
Banff, January 9-11, 1997
Gordon Frank (403)362-1212, Brooks
Lammert Lyzenga (403)378-4571, Rosemary

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 10-12, 1997
Les Burwash (403)948-8532, Airdrie

1997 Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 10 - 12, 1997
Carol Sullivan (403)427-4499

Global Market Focus for Farm Profits
Vegreville, January 13, 1997
Margo Lawrence (403)645-6301, Vegreville

Alberta Canola Producers Commission and Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Convention
Lethbridge Lodge
Lethbridge, January 14 - 16, 1997
Pansy Molen, convention coordinator: (403)452-6487, Fax: (403)451-6933

Prairie Potato Council Meetings
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 15 - 17, 1997
Alan Stuart (403)291-2641, Calgary; Internet: pga@pga.com

Direct Seeding: Back to the Future II
Fairview, January 16, 1997
John Zylstra (403)835-2291, Fairview

1997 Canadian Bull Congress
Camrose Regional Exhibition
Camrose, January 17 - 18, 1997
Teryl Fankhanel (403)672-3640, Camrose; fax (403)672-8140
e-mail: creceo@ccinet.ab.ca

Alberta Agriculture & Food Council Conference
Red Deer, January 18 - 19, 1997
Contact: (403)427-2417; Internet - agric_food@tnc.com

International Fancy Food & Confection Show
San Francisco, January 19 - 21, 1997
Contact: (212)482-6440, New York

Global Market Focus for Farm Profits
Westlock, January 20, 1997
Kerry Engel (403)349-4465, Westlock

Position Yourself for Precision Farming
Taber, January 20 - 21, 1997
Jane Brenner (403)223-1169, Taber; fax (403)223-3412
Jack Payne (403)223-7907, Taber; fax (403)223-3396
e-mail: Payne@agric.gov.ab.ca

1997 Banff Pork Seminar
The Banff Centre
Banff, January 21 - 24, 1997
Contact the University of Alberta (403)469-4902;
e-mail: reilly@oanet.com

Managing Agriculture for Profit Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 28 - 30, 1997
Contact: 1-800-387-6030

1997 Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, January 28 - 30, 1997
Dennis Mueller (403)349-3346, Westlock

Canadian Produce Marketing Association Annual Meeting
Banff, January 29 - February 1, 1997
Phil Dixon (403)447-1860, Edmonton

Great Expectations - Meeting Consumer Demands
Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors Western Regional Conference
Coast Plaza Hotel
Calgary, January 31, 1997
Monika Simon (514)982-0267, Montreal, QC

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Hanna, February 6
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

AgriFuture and Direct Seeding
Red Deer, February 6 - 7, 1997
Russ Evans (403)572-3600, Carbon

Provincial Conservation Workshop and Farm Tech Trade Show
Westerner Park
Red Deer, February 6 - 8
Russ Evans 1-800-251-6846; Pat Kennedy (403)347-4491, Red Deer; Michelle McKinnon (403)948-8512, Airdrie

Uniquely Alberta
Edmonton Convention Centre
Edmonton, February 9 - 12, 1997
Louise McGillivray: 1-800-672-0103

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Crossfield, February 10, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Alberta Dairy Convention
Coast Plaza Hotel
Calgary, February 10 - 11, 1997
Deb Hofstra, fax:(403)387-3559, Millet
Dave Domes, e-mail: domes@agric.gov.ab.ca

Moisture Management to Improve Crop Production
Hanna, February 11, 1997
Russ Horvey (403)664-3899, Oyen

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Lacombe, February 11, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Rocky Mtn. House, February 12, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Stettler, February 13, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Camrose, February 18, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Lac La Biche, February 20, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Camrose, February 24, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway
Killam, February 25, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Global Market Focus for Farm Profits
Fairview, March 3, 1997
Murray Davison 1-800-449-2105

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Cochrane, March 4, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Drumheller, March 5, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Red Deer, March 6, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

National Agriculture Week
March 9 - 15, 1997

Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference
Brandon, Manitoba, March 9 - 11, 1997
Stan Blade (403)422-1789, e-mail: blade@agric.gov.ab.ca

International Conference on Agricultural Production and Nutrition
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. March 19 - 21, 1997
William Lockeretz-Tufts University-Medford, MA 02155
e-mail: wlockeretz@infonet.tufts.edu

Farm and Ranch Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, March 26 - 29, 1997

Global Affair '97, First International Ostrich Conference
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Country , April 4 - 6, 1997
Sharon Fisk (403)932-3832, Cochrane or
Alberta Ostrich Breeders Assoc. 1-800-416-0301

B.C. Foodservice Expo '97
BC Place Stadium
Vancouver, B.C., April 6 - 8, 1997
George Acs 1-800-663-4482

Northwest Food Service Show
Convention Centre, April 12 - 14, 1997
Portland, Oregon
Sherise Snodgrass (503)625-6256, Wilsonville, OR
1-800-645-7350, or e-mail: foodshownw@aol.com

ARFEX 97
Northland AgriCom
Edmonton, April 15 - 16, 1997
Contact: 1-800-461-9762

Grocery Showcase West '97
Round Up Centre, Stampede Park
Calgary, April 21 - 22, 1997
Contact (403)488-7184

International Symposium on Growing Media and Hydroponics
Windsor, Ontario, May 19 - 25, 1997
Dr. A.P.Papadopoulos (519)738-2251, Harrow, Ontario
e-mail: Papadopoulost@em.agr.ca

XVII International Grasslands Congress
Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon Saskatchewan
June 8 - 19, 1997
International Grasslands Congress Office (403)244-4487,
Calgary; fax (403)244-2340

Provincial Direct Seeding Demonstration
Willingdon, June 10, 1997
Kevin Yaremchuk (403)657-3358, Two Hills

Red Deer Direct Seeding Site Tour
Red Deer, June 26, 1997
Karen Yakimishyn (403)340-5325, Red Deer;
e-mail: yakimis@agric.gov.ab.ca

International Fancy Food & Confection Show
New York, June 29 - July 2, 1997
Contact: (212)482-6440, New York

11th International Farm Management Congress
University of Calgary
Calgary, July 15 - 19, 1997
Margaret Ann Stroh - (403)220-6229,
e-mail: mastroh@acs.ucalgary.ca

80-20 4-H Celebration
Alberta 4-H Centre
Battle Lake, August 23 - 24, 1997
Ted Youck (403)422-4444; e-mail: youck@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 9 - 11, 1998
Ted Youck (403)422-4444; e-mail: youck@agric.gov.ab.ca

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.

- Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
- Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
- Olds College (403)556-8355 e-mail for **The Connection** 73543.2137@compuserve.com
- Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1997 or 1998**? Please give the **name** of the event.

2. What are the **dates**?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). Please include **your telephone number**:

Please return this form by* February 21, 1997 *to:

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6
Fax (403)427-2861 or e-mail: palutke@agric.gov.ab.ca

("Coming agricultural events" is published four times a year in **Agri-News**. The next list will be **March 3, 1997**. Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca.)

AGRI-NEWS
December 9, 1996

The growing ethnic food market

A general demand for variety by all consumers and the country's changing ethnic mix are driving the growth in the ethnic food market. Many ethnic foods and beverages are being imported from their home region but with increasing demand, there may be potential to manufacture these products in Alberta for local and export markets.

"Opportunities to produce authentic and mass-appeal ethnic foods using local or imported ingredients do exist," says Kerry Engel, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Studies completed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada show that consumers are looking for greater selection of products on store shelves and on restaurant menus. With the growing popularity of ethnic foods, there appears to be several avenues of opportunity open to Alberta processors."

Studies of restaurant eating patterns show that the most popular styles of ethnic foods are Italian, Chinese and other Oriental, Mexican and Indian. Markets, however, are continually changing; Cajun and Caribbean foods are becoming increasingly popular.

"Most consumers buy ethnic foods in restaurants," says Engel. "Few actually prepare them at home because they think preparation is difficult or too time consuming or they lack experience, proper utensils or ingredients."

To fill the demand for the expanding food market, producers may want to consider:

- working with established ethnic food distributors to develop and distribute new products;
- developing mass-appeal ethnic foods for the North American market;
- importing ingredients and processing or repackaging in containers suitable to the Canadian market; or
- producing easy-to-prepare versions of traditional ethnic foods.

"Food processors must choose between producing an authentic ethnic food or a mass-appeal version for the general consumer," adds Engel. "The challenge is in achieving the right taste and texture, and striking a balance between authenticity and acceptability with the target market.

For further information on developing a food processing business, contact your local rural development business specialist or agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The Fall '96 issue of the *Northwest Processor*, a rural business development newsletter, took a comprehensive look at ethnic food opportunities. Copies of the newsletter are available by contacting Kerry Engel at #2, 10003 - 100 Street, Westlock, AB T7P 2E8 or by calling (403)349-4465. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(403)349-4465

This Week

The growing ethnic food market 1
Midnight snacks and quality shells 2
Inflammation and the performance horse 2
Swath grazing 2
25th anniversary 4-H reunion 3
Growing Alberta gives you Choices 3
Briefs 4

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Midnight snacks and quality shells

Broken and cracked eggs are a major economic loss on commercial farms. More than six per cent of eggs produced can't be used because of shell quality problems.

"Most hens lay their eggs in the morning," says Martin Zuidhof, poultry specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It takes about 20 hours for a hen to form an egg. This means that the largest demand for calcium happens through the night, during the shell formation period."

Past research confirmed that hens have less total calcium in their digestive system during the early morning. The calcium available to hens during the time when most of the eggshell is being formed is at its lowest level.

"Florida researchers experimented with feeding times to determine if hens would produce better quality shells if fed at midnight," says Zuidhof. "In each of three field experiments, the effects of running feeders and lights for 45 minute at midnight were compared to a control group of hens where standard feeding practices were used."

The experiments lasted four days, with the test group of hens being given midnight feedings four days in a row. Sample eggs were collected twice a day from both groups of hens over the course of the experiment. To determine shell quality, shell weight in relation to surface area was calculated.

"Results of this testing show that shell quality was improved by turning on the feeders and lights at midnight," adds Zuidhof. "The greatest improvement was seen in eggs that were laid in the morning. It seems that the additional calcium supply available during the time of heavy demand resulted in denser, sturdier shells."

No adverse effects from midnight feedings were recorded. It is important to remember that light must be provided during the midnight feeding to stimulate consumption. If producers have a high number of morning layers, midnight feeding may prove beneficial in reducing losses due to cracked and broken eggs.

Contact: *Martin Zuidhof*
(403)427-4608

Inflammation and the performance horse

The demands of pleasure and competitive riding and racing can cause various strains, sprains and stresses in a performance horse. Inflammation is a primary cellular response to injury, a natural defence mechanism against tissue damage.

"When dealing with inflammation it is important to know whether it is just a temporary part of the normal tissue healing process, or a condition that requires medical intervention," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "At the 1997 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, Dr. Patricia Dowling DVM will be discussing the myths and truths about controlling pain and inflammation in the performance horse."

Dr. Dowling, a highly regarded large animal specialist, works out of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon (WCVM). The college is a leader in equine research and has always been recognized for making its research findings available.

"The work done by Dr. Dowling and others at the WCVM is valuable to all horse owners and breeders," says Burwash. "In recognition of WCVM's contribution to advancing basic knowledge of health care in horses, the conference has supported them by giving in excess of $10,000 to the Equine Health Research Fund over the past five years."

Dr. Dowling is one of 14 internationally recognized speakers making presentations at the 1997 conference. Registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Les Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Check Alberta Agriculture's Internet site for more conference information and an on-line application form. The address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestock/horses** Conference information is on the What's New page.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Swath grazing

The concept of allowing beef cows to harvest their own feed has caught the imagination of an increasing number of producers.

"Swath grazing is not a new idea," says Lloyd Giebelhaus, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In the interest of reducing costs, many producers are looking at this practice as an alternative. The poor haying and harvesting conditions this year make swath grazing look even more attractive."

Swath grazing refers to the harvest of greenfeed or hay crops only. If producers intend to swath graze mature grain crops, they should be aware of the potential for grain overload.

"Immature crops, cut late in the season, are best suited for swath grazing and can be used by the beef cow late into pregnancy," says Giebelhaus. "Greenfeed crops, such as oats and second cut hay, offer excellent quality feed that lend themselves to swath grazing."

Cont'd on page 3

A few points to consider

- swath grazing eliminates the need for baling or silaging. The cool temperatures restrict most fungal growth and reduce the amount of loss due to weathering;
- access to swaths should be restricted. This encourages total use of the crop. Unrestricted access allows selective grazing by the cows. Producers may want to consider electric fencing;
- using electric fencing limits access, prevents trampling of snow and leaves swaths undisturbed until needed;
- even though moving electric fences is time consuming, it is usually quicker than conventional feeding methods;
- some material will be left behind but not enough to justify harvesting. Cost of feed left behind is low compared to the cost of mechanically harvesting the field; and
- manure from the cows is left in the field and results in a lower manure disposal bill.

Cost savings and time savings can be realized by swath grazing. Producers who have questions are encouraged to call their local beef specialist or contact Lloyd Giebelhaus at (403)785-2266, Sangudo. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Lloyd Giebelhaus*
(403)785-2266

25th anniversary 4-H reunion

On November 12, 1971, Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Honourable Horst Schmidt, together with 14 dedicated volunteers, met and created the Provincial 4-H Advisory Council which later became the Alberta 4-H Council. Since then, the 4-H movement in Alberta has flourished, providing opportunities, friends and memories to thousands of rural youths.

A total of 76 past and present members of the Alberta 4-H Council, 4-H Foundation of Alberta and 4-H departmental staff converged on the Alberta 4-H Centre recently to commemorate the council's quarter century anniversary.

"Probably the most exciting aspect of the weekend was the excellent turnout by members of the first Alberta 4-H Council," says Vicki Berger, 4-H Foundation of Alberta representative. "All but three of the surviving members participated in the event. For many, it was the first time they had seen the 4-H Centre since they launched the dream 25 years ago."

Members from that first council were John Properzi from Westlock, Dorothy Rigney from Bon Accord, Cecil Anderson from Kathryn, Don Hultholm from Holden, Ron Southoff from Czar, Veronica Probst from Lougheed, Jack Cowie from Foremost, Ken Edgerton from Beaverlodge, John Tiltgen from Ponoka, Jackie MacGillivray from Iron River, Allan Shenfield from Spruce Grove, Ted Youck from Edmonton, Floyd Snortland from Manyberries, Arthur Smith from Enilda and President Wilf Longson from High River.

"One of the highlights of the weekend was a silent auction put on by the 4-H Foundation of Alberta," adds Berger. "All told, $1,904.75 was raised from over 60 donated items."

"The support shown by donors and auction participants was tremendous," noted Silver Anniversary Committee Chairman Bill McGrath.

Other members of the organizing committee included Jackie MacGillivary of Iron River, Allan Shenfield of Spruce Grove, Georgina Bayes of Drumheller, Elaine Lyster of Vilna, Penny Wilkes from the 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and Vicki Berger representing the 4-H Foundation of Alberta.

Unveiling of council's 25th anniversary pin took place at the event. Justin Sellin, a member of the White Mountain 4-H Club, designed the pin and was recognized for his contribution during the banquet. Anyone interested in purchasing a pin is asked to contact the 4-H Foundation office in Edmonton at 427-2541.

Contact: *Vicki Berger* *Mahlon Weir*
(403)427-2541 *(403)422-4444*

Growing Alberta gives you Choices

By now many Albertans have seen the billboards, bus boards and magazine ads for the Growing Alberta awareness campaign.

"Growing Alberta is a major initiative designed to make Alberta consumers more aware of the impact agriculture and the agri-food industry make on the province's economy, the environment and Albertan's quality of life," says Bryan Walton, chairman of the Growing Alberta steering committee. "The campaign targets its messages to Albertans, highlighting some very impressive, but perhaps little known facts about agriculture in the province."

Choices, a magazine produced as part of the campaign, has just recently been released. It features Alberta producer profiles, information on specific Alberta made products and highlights some of the environmentally friendly practices Alberta producers and processors use in getting products to consumers.

"The Growing Alberta program is funded and managed by a coalition of public and private industry groups," adds Walton. "The program provides an organized means of getting some much needed information to Albertans on an industry that is an integral part of this province. An industry growing by leaps and bounds and doing a great job managing for the future."

Cont'd on page 4

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Copies of *Choices* are available through selected supermarkets, banks and libraries. Feel free to pick up a copy. For more information on the program, to receive a copy of *Choices*, contact Growing Alberta at (403)231-1615, Calgary.

Contact: Bryan Walton
(403)250-6608

Agri-News Briefs

The Canadian Bull Congress

On January 17 & 18, 1997, the Canadian Bull Congress will bring buyers and sellers together to promote top quality bulls and the attributes that a variety of breeds have to offer. Annually the Congress has hosted over 21 different breeds of cattle and has attracted thousands of national and international visitors. This two-day event allows purebred breeders, commercial cattlemen, and agricultural related product and service exhibitors to exchange resources and information. Special features include: pens of three bull shows, Rancher's Choice, commercial and purebred heifer shows, 4-H judging seminars, agriculture education programs for adults and elementary school children, an "All Breed Steak Challenge" and a banquet. The Congress will be held at the Camrose Regional Exhibition in Camrose, Alberta. For further information, call Teryl Fankhanel, coordinator, at (403)672-3640.

Herb and spices – an industry

A new AgVenture, agriculture business profile, giving an overview of herb and spice production and marketing in Alberta is now available. The factsheet, Adgex #263/830-1, provides a look at the industry and the existing and expanding markets producers can consider. The information also includes lists of some of the regulations and production requirements that govern this industry. The factsheet should be used as information only and is not a substitute for individual assessment of all key issues that would influence the success of an individual enterprise. The factsheet, ***Herb/Spice Industry***, is available at district Agriculture offices or through the Publications Office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

How herbicides work

A new priced publication has been added to the farm and home publications list. ***How Herbicides Work, Mechanisms of Action*** is a well-illustrated, 56 page book that explains how herbicides work, how they enter and move in the plant, how they break down in the plant and soil, and how they are affected by water quality and spray volume. The book discusses both the general principles of herbicide action and the details of how the four major groups of herbicides control weeds. Fifty colour tables, diagrams and photographs make this complex subject easier to understand. The book is targeted at professionals who work with herbicides, but may prove valuable to producers who have an interest in the technical aspects of herbicides. Cost of the publication is $25 plus GST. Copies are available at district Agriculture offices or through the Publications Office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Add $2 plus GST, per order, for shipping and handling. Orders can also be placed by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

AGRI-NEWS

December 16, 1996

Fertility and perinatal mare care

Sub-fertility in mares, often caused by a condition called persistent endometritis, has cost breeders millions of dollars annually due to loss of offspring and management and veterinary care expenses.

"Dr. Michelle LeBlanc, who led the research team at the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, will be conducting two sessions at the *1997 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference*," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Any breeder who has had sub-fertility or infertility problems with their mares will be interested in the research findings Dr. LeBlanc will present during the portion of the program called *Managing the Sub-Fertile Mare*."

As the Professor of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the University of Florida, LeBlanc has conducted extensive research on infertility in mares. She is recognized around the world for the development of procedures to enhance fertility in mares.

"Dr. LeBlanc will also conduct a session on perinatal care of mares and foals," adds Burwash. "With horse breeding season just around the corner, this topic is very timely."

The program for this annual conference follows four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants don't have to limit attendance to one stream and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Fourteen internationally recognized speakers are on the agenda of this conference being held at the Capri Centre in Red Deer on January 10 - 12, 1997.

Conference registration is $75.00 per person. For more information on the 1997 event, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Check Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site for more conference information and an on-line application form. The address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestck/horses** Conference information is on the *What's New* page.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

This Week

Fertility and perinatal mare care 1
Talking turkey 2
Taste of Success '97 2
On-shelf competition is hog market challenge 3
Christmas gifts for the farmer who has everything 3
Canadian lamb markets steady 4
Briefs 5

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Talking turkey

If you're among the many Alberta families who plan to cook a holiday turkey, you'll be glad to know that a turkey dinner is one of the most economical meals you can serve.

"We don't cook turkey all that often, so there can be many concerns about handling it," says Linda St. Onge, foods and nutritious specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "To help with the preparations, there are some tips for buying, handling, and cooking the holiday turkey you should keep in mind."

All turkeys sold in retail outlets are federally inspected and graded and the packaging is usually marked Grade A or Utility. Grade A turkeys are young, and have a near perfect appearance. Utility turkeys are also young, but their appearance may be marred by a missing drumstick, wing, or have torn skin.

Utility turkeys are less expensive and usually an excellent buy. If you want to spend more money, turkey with a pop-up thermometer that indicates when it's done, one with stuffing included or a bird complete with real butter basting, are all available.

To help calculate what size turkey to buy, count on about five servings per kilogram of turkey. If you're having 25 people for dinner, you'll need at least a 5-kilogram bird. Of course, it doesn't hurt to buy a larger turkey and plan some delicious meals later!

"If you're buying a fresh turkey, refrigerate it and cook it within three days," says St. Onge. "The best place to thaw a frozen turkey is in the refrigerator. It takes about 10 hours per kilogram thawing time in the fridge."

Another alternative is immersing the turkey, leave the original plastic wrap on, in a sink of cold water. The water can be changed every hour and should always feel cold. Allow two hours thawing time per kilogram. Refrigerate thawed turkey until you cook it.

"It's fine to make your stuffing ahead of time, but don't stuff the bird until just before you put it into the oven," adds St. Onge. "It's not that the stuffing itself is unsafe, but once it's in the turkey, you have a very large, dense mass. It takes a long time for the internal temperature to be hot enough to kill bacteria. During that length of time, bacteria can multiply very quickly and you could have the whole family sick with food-borne illness."

As soon as the turkey is cooked, remove the stuffing from the cavity. Put it into an oven-proof container and keep it hot until you serve your holiday dinner. Instead of cooking the stuffing inside the turkey, it can be cooked separately in a casserole dish. It will need a much shorter cooking time than the turkey, depending on the stuffing ingredients.

Once supper is over, it's important to get turkey left-overs into the refrigerator. Sitting at room temperature is the surest way to encourage food-borne illness. Refrigerate any stuffing and gravy, too.

"Alberta farmers produce some of the best turkey in the world," says St. Onge. "Look for an Alberta address on the package, and you can be sure your guests will gobble it up! Have a safe, delicious, holiday turkey dinner!"

For more information on choosing, storing, and using Alberta's nutritious foods, contact Linda St. Onge (403) 427-2412 in Edmonton, fax (403) 422-7755 or e-mail to **stonge@agric.gov.ab.ca**

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-2412

Taste of Success '97

Before a new product hits the market shelves there are exhaustive evaluations that can be done to test not only the product but its packaging, promotion and pricing. Last year 10 producers took advantage of a product evaluation program during the first Taste of Success.

"It's like testing the water before you jump in," says Kerry Engel, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When it comes to producing a new food product, it makes sense to test it with consumers to see if the product is not only liked but would actually be picked up and bought."

The Taste of Success is open to all food processors in Alberta who, in an Alberta Public Health certified kitchen, produces any type of food for human consumption. Processors must be able to supply approximately 75 small samples of the product for pre-screening evaluation, sensory evaluation and broker evaluations.

"Comments received from last year's Taste of Success showed that the evaluation helped processors with labelling and packaging, helped with decisions about brokers, and gave constructive comments about product formulation," says Engel. "There are many marketing factors that need to come together to make a product successful. Product evaluation can be expensive and very time consuming. The Taste of Success program is an opportunity for Alberta processors to get some very good feedback for a nominal fee and in a short time."

A maximum of 20 products will be accepted into the program this year. Deadline for applications is January 30, 1997. All products will go through a pre-screening process to determine what level of evaluation they are ready for, the product development level or sensory evaluation level. Pre-screening criteria is included in the registration package.

"Taste of Success '97 includes a product development workshop, sensory evaluation, broker workshop and consultation, media evaluation and consultation, and technical

Cont'd on page 3

assistance from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development," adds Engel. "Again this year, we expect quite a response to this call for products. Producers who want to have their product included in this year's Taste of Success should contact the business development specialist in their area as soon as possible."

For further information on the program, or to request a registration package, contact:

Kerry Engel, Westlock (403)349-4465
Janice McGregor, Morinville (403)939-4351
Sharon Homeniuk, Stony Plain (403)963-6101
Karen Goad, Grande Prairie (403)538-5629

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

On-shelf competition is hog market challenge

Live hog contract prices have been moving downward in steps since mid-May, but are moving down more modestly with each step. While not the only factor affecting the hog market, on-shelf competition is the main one.

"As beef gets more affordable it is driving the downward motion in hog prices," says Doug Walkey, marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With improving profits, the herd reduction prevalent earlier in the year has slowed, which also affects hog prices. Modest reports on herd size may have also spurred optimism for the coming six months."

Currently, Alberta prices are ranging in the $1.90 to $2 per kg range, firmly 30 to 40 cents above last year's equivalent prices.

"The main challenge on the market, for the medium-term, is competition with other meats," says Walkey. "With a potential slide in beef price, it is unlikely that a well supplied market of pork could remain high."

Seasonally, prices for pork are slightly weaker into the Christmas season and should strengthen by March. Reliance on export keeps eyes on the Canadian dollar exchange rate. As the dollar moves down below 75 cents U.S., export markets may benefit for the short-term and could mark a high for the year.

Prices should remain steady to slightly lower for the remainder of 1996. The new year should offer modestly lower prices, perhaps even breaking the $1.60 per kg level.

"Strategies for the current market should address both input and output issues," says Walkey. "It can be as important to lock in affordable feed supplies as it is to hang on to favourable prices. Consider contracting alternatives on the bottom line, both feedgrains and livestock sales."

Contact: Doug Walkey
(403)782-3301

Christmas gifts for the farmer who has everything

Looking for that unique gift? That something special, and just a little out of the ordinary to gift that 'hard to buy' for rural Albertan? It may be worth your while to stop by and check out some of the book choices available through your local Agriculture office.

There are dozens of Agriculture publications, ranging from $3 to $30, that make terrific gifts. For example:

Weeds of the Prairies – ($16.05) has 375 colour photos and illustrations that make it the most complete work of its kind on the Canadian prairies. This book will make planning a weed control program easier and more effective. It can also help youngsters learn how to identify weeds.

Beef Cow/Calf Manual – ($10.70) has sections on herd management, nutrition, health, pests, handling and range/pasture management. This book gives you the basic information needed for beef herd management.

Corrals for Handling Beef Cattle – ($10.70) this best seller can help make anyone's cattle handling easier. It features information on cattle behaviour, handling techniques, corral design, corral geometry and corral components. It's packed with over 60 designs and corral plans.

Farm Workshops – ($5.35) tells you how to make workshops safe, organized and functional. It shows how to plan a layout that saves steps and encourages organized work habits. The book also shows how to size the shop to your needs and capabilities, how to select the type of foundation, amount of insulation, lighting levels, heating, ventilation and electric systems necessary.

Hobby Greenhouses in Alberta – ($8.56) for the person on your list who has a green thumb, a small greenhouse can extend the growing season and expand the range of crops possible. This well-illustrated book tells how to build, heat and manage a small greenhouse. A section on the basic requirements of plants and how to grow specific vegetable, fruit and ornamental crops is also featured.

Other books available that make wonderful gifts include:
Pruning in Alberta – $3.21;
Alberta Horticultural Guide – $3.21;
Raising Meat Rabbits in Alberta – $5.35;
Alberta Forage Manual – $10.21;
Weed Seedling Guide – $8.56; and many more.

Feel free to drop by your local Agriculture office or the Publications Office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Orders can also be placed by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton. All prices shown include G.S.T. Please add $2.14 per order for shipping and handling.

Contact: Publications Office
(403)427-0391

Canadian lamb markets steady

The increasing demand during the Christmas season and the relatively tight supply in North America are dominant forces in lamb markets.

"By the end of November, Canada West Foods Corporation in Innisfail raised the average bid to $2.35 per pound for railgrade, up from $2.30 per pound price in mid-November," says Chuanliang Su, research assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Bids for 70 to 85 lb lambs were at the $115.00 per cwt level, live weight. Direct sale price is expected to remain strong, particularly until Christmas supplies are served."

The U.S. lamb production in November was estimated at 20.0 million pounds, down 13 per cent from 23.0 million pounds in October. Total January to November production was estimated at 241.0 million pounds, six per cent below 258.0 million pounds for the same period in 1995.

Total U.S. lamb imports in September were estimated at 3.6 million pounds, while mutton imports were estimated at 1.2 million pounds. Total lamb imports for the first nine months of 1996 were 38.5 million pounds, up 26 per cent from a year ago. Mutton imports for the same period were 16.4 million pounds, up five per cent from last year.

The cold storage of lamb and mutton in the United States was estimated at 10.5 million pounds on October 31, down six per cent from a month ago, but up 40 per cent from a year ago.

"Both slaughter and feeder lamb prices are expected to remain strong up to the Christmas season," says Su. "However, producers are advised that lamb prices may turn lower in early 1997, especially in January. Auction sales in Alberta during January and February tend to be light in the term of volume, and producer prices are usually lower than normal. Even though some people believe lamb markets may hold steady after the Christmas season due to the tight supply, producers should be cautious when making marketing plans."

Due to the demand during the Christmas season, quality light lambs can be priced with a very attractive premium relative to heavy lambs. Many producers may find that it is more profitable to market light lambs during the Christmas season rather than in early 1997. Costs of raising market lambs and risks involved with production and marketing of lambs may offset the potential returns.

"For producers whc prefer/need to market their lambs after the Christmas season, especially in January 1997, forward contracting is an alternative," adds Su. "Canada West Foods Corporation is offering forward contracting options to lamb producers for the Christmas season and into 1997. A contract with favourable terms will reduce the potential market risks afterwards."

Current prices offer producers very attractive returns for both slaughter and feeder lambs. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of any market opportunities which exist and contact various buyers to maximize returns.

Contact: *Chuanliang Su*
(403)422-2887

Agri-News Briefs

Global market focus course

If your business could use a better network to access information or if you need new ways of gathering market intelligence to make your ideas happen, the *Global Market Focus Course for Farm Profits* could be just what you're looking for. Two of the scheduled five sessions took place in November. Participants' interests ranged from beef, greenhouse, and boer goat production to hay processing, Morgan horse rearing and grain production consulting. This course will run in Vegreville and Westlock in January, 1997 and in Fairview in March, 1997. For further information or to register, call the nearest location: Murray Davison in Fairview 1-800-449-2105; Margo Sevcik in Vegreville (403)645-6301; or Kerry Engel in Westlock (403)349-4465. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Top honours for Growing Alberta

At the 1996 Awards of the Canadian Agri-Marketing Association (CAMA) the Growing Alberta campaign received top honours in the regional multi-media category. The campaign was evaluated on print tabloids – *Choices*, TV public service announcements, radio spots, CD-Rom presentation, displays, bank envelope stuffers, milk carton ads, billboards, bus boards, publicity packages and trade show involvement. The campaign is designed to give some much needed information to Albertans on agricultural industries and their importance to the province. For further information, contact Bryan Walton, chairman of the Growing Alberta steering committee, at (403)231-1615 in Calgary.

Winter wheat and canola producers convention

The Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission and the Alberta Canola Producers Commission are holding a joint annual convention on January 14 - 16, at the Lethbridge Lodge in Lethbridge. Topics ranging from farmers for justice, what's on the Internet, and presentations by Ducks Unlimited to updates on winter wheat production practices and canola production centres, make up the three-day conference agenda. Guest speakers include: Hon. Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Gordon Cummings, CEO for the Alberta Wheat Pool; Larry McNamara, president and CEO of Canbra Foods Ltd.; Gordon Bacon, director of market development for the Canadian Wheat Board; and, Gordon Love, president of GKL Commodities Inc. Two of the highlights are the market outlook panel for grains and oilseeds and weather patterns by Dr. Tim Ball. For further information, or to register, contact Pansy Molen, convention coordinator, at (403)452-6487.

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AGRI-NEWS

December 23, 1996

Turkey trimmings and left-overs

Groaning, the family pushes themselves from the holiday table. It was another culinary masterpiece. Now, what to do with the left-overs?

"The first thing is to get the meat off the bone, wrapped and into the refrigerator as soon as possible," says Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As with any meat product, it is important to store turkey properly and safely. Stuffing and gravy should be stored separately in covered containers."

To keep the left-overs in the best condition, wrap well in small packages or place in shallow, smaller containers. Refrigerated cooked turkey should be used within three to four days. Gravy and stuffing should be used within two days. Be sure to thoroughly heat left-overs and bring the gravy to a boil before serving.

"Turkey freezes very well," says St. Onge. "If properly wrapped, you can keep frozen cooked turkey for up to three months before it begins to lose texture and flavour. Stuffing and gravy can be safely kept frozen for up to one month."

Whether you make a delicious soup stock by boiling and simmering bones, skin, and any small bits of turkey in water for several hours, plan a tempting stir-fry, or use the gravy and turkey bits to make a turkey pot pie, left-overs are one of the treats many families look forward to after the holiday banquet.

"Turkey is very versatile and recipes for cooked turkey abound," adds St. Onge. "Label your packages with the date they were frozen. If you make a broth from the turkey carcass, remember it can be frozen, too. Put broth into a container that will accommodate the expansion of the liquid as it freezes. Broth can be kept frozen for about four months."

Alberta farmers produce some of the best turkey in the world. Be sure to look for an Alberta address on the package, for a turkey you'll be proud to serve!

For more information on choosing, storing, and using Alberta's nutritious foods, contact Linda St. Onge (403) 427-2412 in Edmonton, fax (403) 422-7755 or e-mail to **stonge@agric.gov.ab.ca**.

Contact: Linda St. Onge at (403)427-2412

Season's Greetings

This Week

Turkey trimmings and left-overs 1
How to recognize athletic ability in horses 2
Snowy, cold start to winter 2
Breathe a dust-free sigh of relief 3
Direct seeding discussion group 3
Crop rotation, this year's lesson 4
Processing industry summer employment program expands 4
Briefs 5

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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

How to recognize athletic ability in horses

Athletic movement is a naturally occurring quality admired and desired by owners and breeders of performance horses. The typical features and structural attributes that set the truly athletic horse apart from others have been studied, discussed and debated for years.

"Assessing movement in horses is both an art and a science," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Over the past 20 years, the Horse Industry section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has been involved in the development of a horse evaluation system. Form to function is the basis for most evaluation systems. A panel discussion on the qualities and traits relative to breed ideals and common to great moving horses is planned for the *1997 Horse Owners and Breeders Conference*."

Panel members for the discussion are: John Miller, Quarter Horse breeder and experienced horseman from High River; Albert Kley, Calgary, riding master at Spruce Meadows and one of the most respected horsemen in the world; and, Les Burwash from Airdrie, manager of equine programs in the province, and closely involved with the development of a horse evaluation system. The panel brings together over 100 years of equine experience for conference participants to draw from.

"Different equine disciplines demand specific abilities in horses," says Burwash. "Matching a horse to those demands is one of the challenges facing equestrian competitors. Five main categories are considered when assessing horses - front limbs; hind limbs; head, neck, body and balance; type; and athletic movement. The assessment of athletic movement, predicting the potential of athletic ability of a horse, is further broken down into four components – length of stride; lightness; rhythm; and, impulsion."

Assessing athletic movement gives horse owners and breeders a better idea of which horses are athletic and which are not. It helps identify early in the selection process which horses have the ability to be versatile and allows owners to choose and concentrate on animals that possess the required qualities.

"Each year, the conference brings together equine and equestrian specialists to help keep Alberta horse owners and breeders up to date on health, sport and breeding issues," adds Burwash. "The agenda and the 14 internationally recognized speakers scheduled for the 1997 event offer a diverse and varied pool of knowledge. I'm positive participants will enjoy and appreciate the information offered during the two-day deliberations."

The program agenda follows four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants don't have to limit their attendance to one stream and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Topics covered at the conference include: perinatal care of mares and foals; managing sub-fertile mares; pain and inflammation in horses; metabolic diseases in distance performance horses; the performance horse registry; the market place; transporting horses effectively; sports science for riders; and, things families can do to enjoy horses together.

This premier horse conference will be held January 10 - 12, 1997 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer, Alberta. Conference registration is $75 per person.

For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator. Or, check Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site for more conference information, speaker biographies and an on-line application form. The address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestck/horses**. Conference information is in the *What's New* section.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Snowy, cold start to winter

So far, Albertan's early winter experiences have been cold and filled with snow, snow and more snow.

"A November this cold occurs only about once in 20 years," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The provincial average temperature for November was 6.4 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of -4.7 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported temperatures three to eight degrees below normal."

November began with near normal temperatures. Cool Arctic air invaded Alberta from the north the second week of the month, spreading into the southern region by the end of that week. An even colder blast of air followed, dropping temperatures 10 to 20 degrees below normal.

The cold air remained over Alberta for about two weeks. Temperatures were near to below normal for the rest of the month.

"November is usually the second driest month of the year," says Dzikowski. " Snow storms contributed most of the precipitation during the month. Cool temperatures combined with the snow and freezing rain quickly ended fall field work.

The provincial average precipitation was 16.5 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 19.8 mm. These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Cont'd on page 3

"All regions reported above normal precipitation totals," adds Dzikowski. "Elk Island National Park reported the greatest precipitation total, 62.4 mm, 382 per cent of normal. Whitecourt was also buried in snow, reporting 62.3 mm or 261 per cent of normal for November."

The central and north western regions reported 322 and 250 per cent of normal respectively. The north east and Peace regions reported over 170 per cent of normal. Near normal precipitation was reported in southern Alberta.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Breathe a dust-free sigh of relief

As farmers work to move tough grain this year, it's important to make sure to protect their lungs so they can really breathe easier once the job is done.

"Moving heated grain can mean working with moldy grain," says Karen Malyk, protective clothing research associate with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Proper respiratory equipment is necessary to prevent lung damage."

Working with grain conditions that are prevalent this year without a mask creates phlegm build-up, coughing, may lead to flu-like symptoms affecting breathing later in life and can even promote the development of asthma. Repeated exposures to grain dusts and moulds can eventually block the tiny air sacs in the lungs.

"It is essential to take precautions and wear proper breathing equipment when working with moldy grain," says Malyk. "The first step in choosing the proper respirator is to identify the toxicity of the material you'll be exposed to. Then, evaluate which type of respirator is most appropriate."

There are two types of respirators farmers should be familiar with. The air purifier respirator filters takes contaminants out of the air and prevents substances from getting into the lungs. This filter type is effective when dealing with dusts, molds, mists and fumes. It comes in full face mask, dual and single cartridge, or disposable dust mask form.

"The second type of respirator is the atmosphere supplying respirator which supplies oxygen while working in the type of environment where noxious gases are present," adds Malyk. "This respirator should be used when working in a silo where there is nitrous oxide gas, or manure pits which produce hydrogen sulfide. These gases are heavier than air and can force all the oxygen out of a building so simple filtration is not enough."

When working in situations where molds could be present, be sure that the mask being used is safety standard approved through NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health), MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration) or OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

"Be sure to request a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter mask, either as a disposable dust mask with elastic strap or as cartridge filters that attach to a dual or single cartridge respirator," says Malyk. "HEPA is added protection from the regular dust mask as it will prevent the smaller microns like molds from entering the lungs."

Contact your local farm supply store to pick up the correct respiratory protective equipment.

Contact: Karen Malyk
(403)427-4378

Direct seeding discussion group

Exchanging information and sharing experiences are some of the most effective learning tools that can be used to develop and establish methods of practice.

"Many of the producers who are already involved in direct seeding have valuable, first-hand information that is worth sharing," says Peter Gamache. "Given the chance and opportunity, producers could help each other as we work with new and improved direct seeding methods and ideas."

The Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) has set up a direct seeding discussion group. Through e-mail, farmers can now discuss direct seeding experiences with other producers and agronomists throughout Alberta and worldwide.

"Chances are that if a producer is having trouble with equipment or seeding methods, there is another producer out there who has been in a similar situation and may just have an answer or an option that could be tried," says Gamache. "This communication tool has amazing potential."

Subscribing to the discussion group is easy. Go to the ARTI homepage on the Internet, the address is **http://paridss.usask.ca/consgroups/arti/index.htm**, then click on Direct Seeding Discussion Group and follow the information and instructions.

If you don't have access to the Internet but have e-mail you can subscribe by sending a message to the **listserv@paridss.usask.ca**. The message in the body of your e-mail should be ADD directseeding. The list server will send you a message confirming you have been added. After you subscribe, mail messages can be sent to the group from your e-mail package. The address is, **directseeding@paridss.usask.ca**. The message is automatically distributed to all currently subscribed members of the group.

Cont'd on page 4

"This is an unmoderated group," says Gamache. "This means that everyone subscribed to the group will see the messages and anyone can comment. The growing discussion group will only be as successful as the subscribers and users make it. Everyone's input is valuable."

Contact: *Peter Gamache*
(403)427-3361
gamachep@oanet.com

Crop rotation, this year's lesson

The 1996 cropping season will stay in many people's memories for several reasons. Weather seemed to be working against many producers' hopes of record crops, and giving encouragement to others.

"One of the least appreciated lessons revisited this year was on crop rotation," says Ron Hochridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Field crops often suffered from carry over diseases in soil. Wheat fields, in particular."

A majority of wheat crops in some areas of Alberta developed take-all root rot to some extent. For many the disease level was low. However, there were areas in the Wetaskiwin-Leduc-Ponoka area where wheat yields were reduced by over 50 per cent.

Following a hay crop with any of the cereals is usually considered good crop rotation. Very few problems carry from a broadleaf crop (alfalfa) over to a grassy crop. But, care must be taken when working under a hay field that has very little legume left in the stand. Most of the time quack grass or brome take over the field and both of these species can carry root rot diseases that infect cereals.

"The usual recommendations for reducing root rots are to plant resistant varieties, purchase vigorous seed, use recommended seed treatment, make sure phosphorous levels are adequate and use crop rotations," says Hockridge. "Even though farmers did all of these things, some still had severe losses. Wheat was probably the most susceptible under the conditions faced this year."

Crop rotation is easy in theory. Look at the type of crops you want to grow and arrange them in an order that makes the most sense for weed and disease control and fertility management. In practice, it isn't quite that simple. Along with advance planning, producers should assess the plants left in the field, whether weeds or tame species, and make the final decision based on all factors that can have an affect on the outcome.

Contact: *Ron Hockridge*
(403)361-1240

Processing industry summer employment program expands

In an effort to create job opportunities for post-secondary students in Alberta's processing industry, the Agricultural Processing Industry Employment Program (APIEP) will be expanded in the summer of 1997, pending provincial budget approval in March.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development piloted the employment program from May 1 to August 31, 1996, says Christine Paproski, program delivery specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Last summer, 16 processors participated in the APIEP by hiring an undergraduate student in college or university. The program was beneficial to students and processors."

Employers must be the owner of a value-added processing business, located in Alberta and the position offered must be full-time. Students must be attending an Alberta post-secondary institution, enrolled in an undergraduate degree or diploma, and may not be a relative of the employer.

"This summer employment provides career-related experience for the student and a first-hand look into the processing industry in Alberta," says Paproski. "The processor receives financial assistance for hiring qualified summer help. Through the program, the Government of Alberta reimburses the employer for one-third of the employee's monthly salary to a maximum of $500 per month."

Although over 150 processors have already expressed an interest in APIEP, more processors are encouraged to apply. Employers have until the end of February, 1997 to recruit a student and submit their completed APIEP application.

For more information on the APIEP, or to obtain an application and a copy of program guidelines, call Paproski in Edmonton at 427-3124 or toll free 1-800-232-7387.

Contact: *Christine Paproski*
(403)427-3124

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta farm writers among the best

At this year's Canadian Farm Writers Federation annual banquet, four Alberta Farm Writers Association (AFWA) members won awards for excellence in agriculture communications. **Bill Black** and **Dianne Finstad**, CKRD-TV Red Deer, won for television news reporting. Black's story *Swine Class* took the gold award and Finstad's story, *Farm Safety* was awarded silver. **Mark Kihn's** story *Alberta's Wild Rose Classic*, about Alberta's premier bison show and sale, won the bronze award in the news release category. **Larry Thomas** of Priddis, associate editor of Cattleman magazine, also won bronze in the press editorial category for his column *Should we be Doing Business with China?*. The AFWA is a group of agriculture writers and reporters in the province. For more information about the AFWA, contact president Tracey Feist at (403)932-7595 in Cochrane.

Precision farming

From the basics to advanced information on precision farming, the Precision Farming Conference will cover all the bases. The conference will be held on January 20 - 21, 1997 at the Taber Community Centre, Taber. Conference presenters include producers, agri-business representatives, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff, and research staff from across western Canada and the mid-west U.S. From the key-note addresses, a farmer panel, an evening bear-pit session and four concurrent sessions, the two-day event is designed to provide the information producers need at all levels of involvement. Registration is $79, early registration before January 10, is only $59. Early registration is recommended as conference attendance is limited to 300. For further information or to register, contact Rob Dunn at (403)381-5119 in Lethbridge.

Bison Show and Sale

On November 29, Regina, Saskatchewan was host to the very successful Canadian National Bison Show and sale. A total of 261 head were auctioned off during the sale at very respectable prices. The record breaking high seller was The Grand Champion female sold for $21,000, a record-breaking sale for consignors Joe and Georgina Orcheski of Buffalo Hill Ranch, Roundhill, Alberta. Averages for bred two-year old heifers, yearling heifers and bull calves were $9,569, $8,129 and $5,315 respectively. In total, 28 bison breeders from across Canada were represented at the show, making it one of the largest ever held in western Canada. For further information, contact the Alberta Bison Association at 1-800-683-6747, or Norm Moore of Moore's Auctioneering (403)388-3759.

MAP '97 – smart farming

At the end of January, close to 400 of Alberta's most progressive farmers will be travelling to the Capri Centre in Red Deer for western Canada's premiere farm management conference, Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP). The conference runs from January 28 - 30, 1997 and will feature three days of information, discussion and social activities designed to help producers make sound management decisions about the future of their farms. A lineup of speakers will address the three daily themes of the conference: information and technology; business development; and, market outlook. Plenary sessions will be presented by Stephen Murgatroyd of Athabasca University, Paul Jonjack of Ocean Spray Cranberries, and Gary Gregor, a sports psychologist who helped the Saskatchewan Roughriders win the 1989 Grey Cup. Farmers and farm families wishing to attend this valuable, exciting conference can call 1-800-387-6030 for registration details.

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